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The Philosophy of Love

(Devotional Aphorisms of Devarsi Narada)

HANUMANPRASAD PODDAR

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

(DEVOTIONAL APHORISMS OF DEVARSI NARADA)

Commentary by
SHRI HANUMANPRASAD PODDAR

Translated by
Lakhpat Rai

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श्रीराधाकृष्णाभ्यां नमः

DEDICATION

तस्मिंस्तज्जने भेदाभावात् ॥

HUMBLE SALUTATIONS

TO

THEE, MY MASTER —

THE VERY EMBODIMENT OF
ŚRĪ RĀDHĀ-MĀDHAVA

The work of translating the Devotional Aphorisms into English was undertaken at thy command and with thy grace it has come to a successful conclusion. With all humility it is dedicated at thy lotus feet

Gita Vatika,
Gorakhpur.

by

thy humble servant

Dated: the 9th February 1981
(Basant Panchami)

Lakhpat Rai

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

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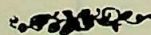
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THE PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The Publishers have great pleasure in placing before the public, particularly the English-knowing religious-minded readers, this second and revised edition of *The Philosophy of Love* by Sri Hanumanprasad Ji Poddar, an eminently exalted saint and the Founder-editor of the 'Kalyan', published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

The circumstances in which this revision had to be carried out have been amply stated by the translator in his note. It will not be out of place to say a few words about the translator - he was born in 1900 A.D. at Bhirauti (Budaun), U.P.; early education at Chandausi; I.Sc. and B.Sc. from Banaras Hindu University in FIRST DIVISION *cum laude* in 1918 and 1920 respectively; M.Sc. (Prev.) from Allahabad University in 1921; selected for INDIAN FOREST SERVICE in the same year; graduated from Oxford University in Forestry with distinction in 1923; also obtained the Diploma in Forestry with distinction; later obtained the Master of Arts degree of the same University; posted to Madhya Pradesh and rose to prominence as the Chief Conservator of Forests, the position which he held from 1950 to 1954 in that State; Director of Forests, Orissa Government for some time; joined in 1960 the Editorial Board of the 'Kalyana-

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Kalpataru' published by the Gita Press; served as Honorary Editor of the above-mentioned leading religious journal from 1974 to 1975; Trustee of Hanumanprasad Poddar Smarak Samiti, at present leading the austere life of an aspirant in the Gita Vatika, Gorakhpur.

The publishers will feel accomplished of purpose if this edition can awaken even an iota of Devotion for the Lord in the minds of its readers.

THE PUBLISHERS

SSSS

Some years back Messrs Orissa Cement Limited had got published 5,000 copies of 'The Philosophy of Love' by Sri Hanumanprasad Ji Poddar for free distribution. The original edition of this book was published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Sri Jaidayal Ji Dalmia sent a couple of copies of this book to the Saint who lives in the Gita Vatika, Gorakhpur. The Saint was highly impressed with the get-up and the printing of the book and casually glanced through it. He immediately got the impression that the English rendering required alterations here and there. He, therefore, passed on the book to a devotee of his for being examined in this light. He made some notes and returned the book to the Saint. Later on the book was handed over to the undersigned for being checked up carefully. It was found that the translation into English was not faithful. It was also noticed that the English renderings of the Sanskrit texts from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, the *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* and the Hindi texts from the *Rāmacharīt-mānasa* did not agree with those given in the English versions of the above books published by the Gita Press. In view of the above facts, the Saint decided that a fresh translation should be undertaken bearing the above points in mind. This work was entrusted to the undersigned who hesitated to do it at first as he did not feel upto the difficult task

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because of his own short-comings. The Saint's command, however, had to be carried out. All possible precautions have been taken to adhere strictly to the text and to see that the rendering in English becomes faithful. The Saint very kindly agreed to listen to the translation from the very beginning to the end, and it has his approval.

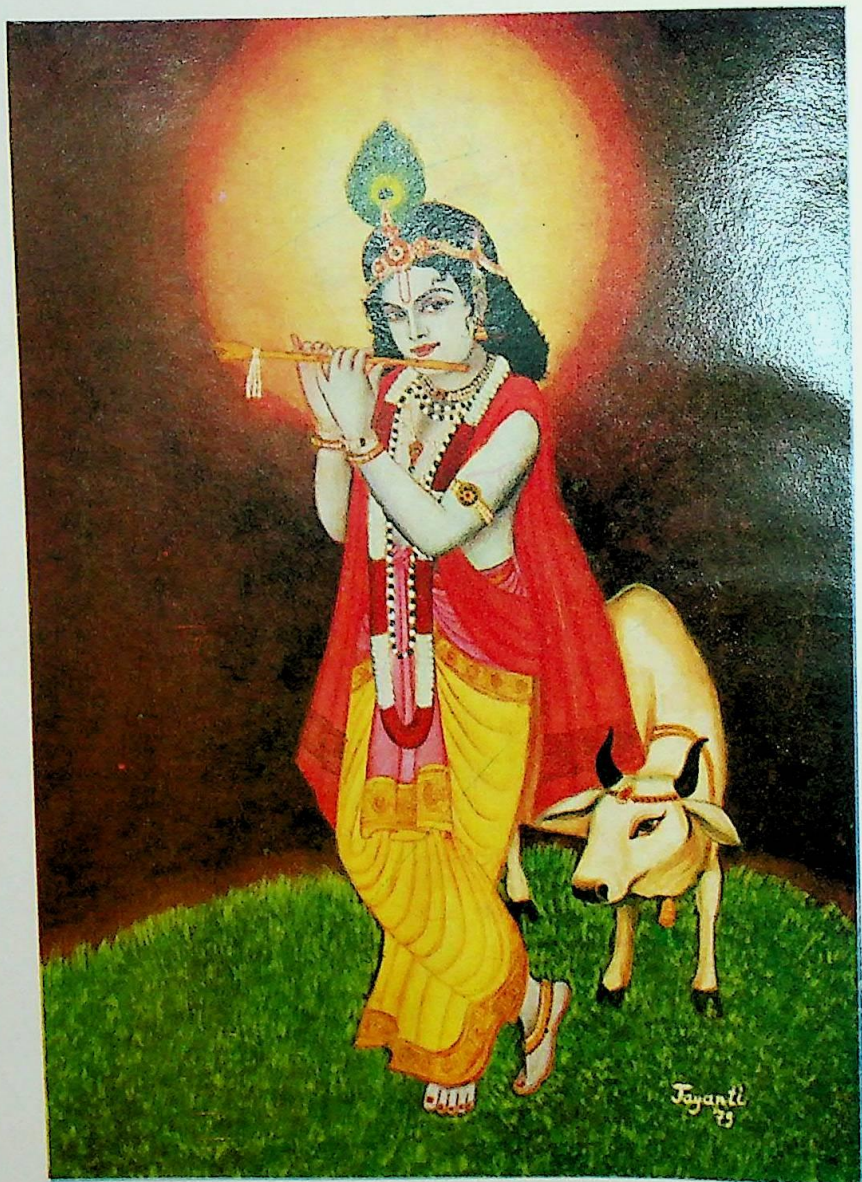
The task of a translator is an extremely difficult one especially when he has no command over the language used for the translation. Nevertheless, the undersigned will consider himself accomplished of purpose if he has been able to place the main substance of what Sri Hanumanprasad Ji has said in his original text. This humble work is dedicated to the lotus feet of all the devotees of Sri Rādhā-Mādhava and the English-reading public in general. Finally, he is offering his humble apologies for his own short-comings.

Lakhpat Rai

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

श्रीमद्भगवत्	श्रीम.भा. अथवा भा.
श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता	गीता अथवा गी.
रामचरितमानस	रा.च.मा.
महाभारत	म. भा.
पातञ्जल योग-दर्शन	पा. यो. द.
लघुभागवतामृत	ल. भा.
उत्तर खण्ड	उ. खं.
उपनिषद्	उ.
कांदोग्य	कां.
आदिपुराण	आ. पु.
विष्णुपुराण	वि. पु.
ब्रह्मवैवर्तपुराण	ब्र. वै. पु.
कृष्णखण्ड	कृ. खं.
पद्मपुराण	प. पु.
Śrīmad Bhāgavata	Bha.
Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā	Gītā
Rāmacharitamānasa	Ra. ca. Ma.
Mahābhārata	Ma. Bha.
Patañjal Yogadarśana	Pa. Yo. Da.



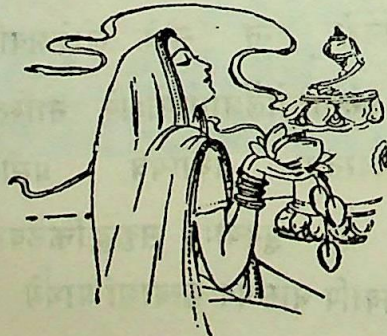
श्रीहरिः

प्रार्थना

नवजलधरवर्णं चम्पकोद्भासिकर्णं
विकसितनलिनास्यं विस्फुरन्मन्दहास्यम् ।
कनकरुचिदुक्कूलं चारुबर्हावचूलं
कमपि निखिलसारं नौमि गोपीकुमारम् ॥
मुखजितशरदिन्दुः केलिलावण्यसिन्धुः
करविनिहतकन्दुर्वल्लवीप्राणबन्धुः ।
बपुरुपसृतरेणुः कक्षनिक्षिप्तवेणु-
वचनवशगधेनुः पातु मां नन्दसूनुः ॥
त्वां च वृन्दावनाधीश त्वां च वृन्दावनेश्वरि ।
काकुभिर्वन्दमानोऽयं मन्दः प्रार्थयते जनः ॥
योग्यता मे न काचिद्वां कृपालाभाय यद्यपि ।
महाकृपालुमौलित्वात्तथापि कुरुतं कृपाम् ।
अयोग्ये सापराधेऽपि दृश्यन्ते कृपयाकुलाः ।
महाकृपालवो हन्त लोके लोकेशवन्दिता ॥
भक्तेर्वा करुणाहेतोर्लेशाभासोऽपि नास्ति मे ।
महालीलेश्वरतया तथाप्यत्र प्रसीदतम् ॥
यदक्षम्यं नु युवयोः सकृद्भक्तिलवादपि ।
तदागः क्वापि नास्त्येव कृत्वाशां प्रार्थये ततः ॥

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

एष पापी रुदन्नुच्चैरादाय रदनैस्तूणम् ।
 हा नाथौ नाथति प्राणी सीदत्यत्र प्रसीदतम् ॥
 हाहारावमसौ कुर्वन् दुर्भगो भिक्षते जनः ।
 एतां मे शृणुतं काकुं काकुं शृणुतमीश्वरौ ॥
 वाचेह दीनया याचे साक्रन्दमतिमन्दधीः ।
 किरतं करुणस्वान्तौ करुणोर्मिच्छटामपि ॥
 मधुराः सन्ति यावन्तो भावाः सर्वत्र चेतसः ।
 तेभ्योऽपि प्रेम मधुरं प्रसादीकृतं निजम् ॥
 नाथितं परमेवेदमनाथजनवत्सलो ।
 स्वं साक्षाद् दास्यमेवास्मिन् प्रसादीकृतं जने ॥
 अञ्जलिं मूर्ध्नि विन्यस्य दीनोऽयं भिक्षते जनः ।
 अस्य सिद्धिरभीष्टस्य सकृदप्युपपाद्यताम् ॥
 (स्तवपुष्पालञ्जलि



PRAYER

3

I bow down to some such (ineffable) Kṛṣṇa (Gopī Kumāra, an epithet of Lord Kṛṣṇa) - quintessence of all objects - who has a hue of a fresh water - laden cloud, whose ears are graced with Champaka blossoms, whose countenance is (lovely) like a full-blown lotus, who is smiling gently, whose upper silk garment is golden bright and to whose coronet a pretty peacock plume is fixed.

May that Lord Kṛṣṇa (Darling of Nanda), the comeliness of whose countenance has paled into insignificance the autumnal moon, who is the ocean of the charm of (His) pastimes, who is holding a ball in His hand, who is the Beloved of the cowherd damsels, whose body is greyish with dust; who is holding the flute under the armpit and whose words control the cows, protect me.

Extolling You with words of affliction, I, a dull-witted individual entreat You, O Kṛṣṇa (Lord of Vrindābana) and You, O Rādhā (Queen of Vrindābana).

Even though I have not an iota of ability to earn the grace of You two, nevertheless being (supremely) pre-eminent among the highly compassionate, do You both be compassionate (to me).

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

Aha! In this world the extremely compassionate people are seen to be full of mercy even towards the unworthy and sinners. O You worthy of adoration by Lokapālas (Lokapāla is a guardian of a quarter of the world) like Indra (the god of gods) etc. I do not have in me even the slightest semblance of devotion which could arouse the compassion of You two, nevertheless You are the Lord of ample pastimes and so be compassionate to me.

There is not a single offence which would be inexcusable by practising even once a little devotion towards You two. It is, therefore, with this very hope that I am entreating (You).

Weeping loudly and with utter humility this sinner prays, 'O Lord! This creature is feeling nonplussed, shower mercy on him.'

Deeply lamenting, this unfortunate fellow is supplicating, 'O Divine Couple! Listen to this afflicted voice of mine; do listen to this confounded voice of mine.'

With this piteous and weeping voice I, an extremely dull-witted fellow, am imploring 'May both of You, whose heart is full of compassion, bathe me too in the refulgence of the waves of Your compassion. Whatever sweet sentiments there exist in the realm of emotion, do kindly bestow on me Your own Love which is the sweetest of them all.'

PRAYER

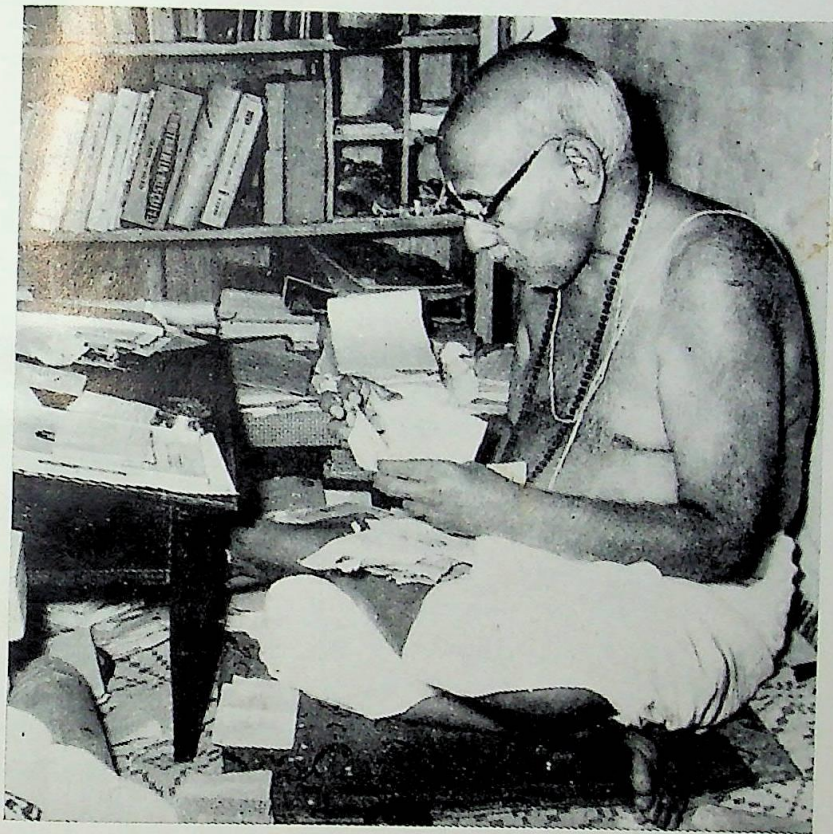
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Both of You are affectionate to the forlorn people. I have begged of You this supreme object. May both of You be pleased to bestow upon me Your personal bodily servitude.

With the *Añjali* (the two open hands placed side by side and slightly hollowed) raised to the forehead, this miserable fellow is supplicating You. Do bestow (on him) once the object longed for by him.

PREFACE

It was in 1916 A.D. that for the first time I happened to see a Bengali edition of the aphorisms of Devarṣi Nārada. I was in seclusion at that time. With God's grace my mind used to feel attracted a little towards spiritual discipline; in that the aphorisms of Devarṣi were of a great help. While reflecting upon the aphorisms at that very place a desire to write a commentary on them awakened in my mind and after some time the commentary was indeed written up. At that time neither there was a desire to get it printed nor was there any facility at all. About 1920 A.D. I was in Bombay and there one day during the course of conversation with the late Sri Khemraj Ji, proprietor of Sri Venkateshwara Press, a talk about the aphorisms happened to come up. With great earnestness he took away the manuscript from me and gave it to the Press too for printing; but due to inadvertence it remained lying there. I was not particularly eager and so I did not press him about it. The Sethji passed away. Several years after that I brought back the copy from there. There was no inclination to have it printed. Feeling diffident I said to myself 'who am I to write a commentary on devotional scriptures ?' But as my popularity started increasing, that Sattwic diffidence began to disappear and eventually the idea to print it was finalized. I read it over again; a need was felt to make alterations and additions in it at places, so the



Sri Hanuman Prasad ji Poddar—the Commentator

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work of printing was kept in abeyance. Due to Divine inspiration it was scrutinized again and after making some amendments, all the aphorisms were gradually published in the 'Kalyan'. The present book is an added and altered form of that series.

When the commentary was written in 1916 A.D. perhaps there were only one or two commentaries on it in Hindi then.

Several commentaries have come out since. Nevertheless, there can be only two reasons for printing this commentary — firstly, a lurking desire for name and fame and secondly the expectation of my spiritual welfare through a critical study of the devotional scriptures. Actually, the more the devotion is talked about, the more beneficial it is. Because devotion alone is the foremost Sādhana (spiritual endeavour) for the attainment of Divine Love and in the form of consummation that alone is Divine Love. It is hoped that devout and learned readers, reflecting thus, will not regard this attempt of mine as altogether reprehensible and will excuse my impertinence, along with this they will excuse my shortcomings. In love, special value is attached to sentiment alone as compared with the language. Although I have no claim to write anything at all by way of commentary on devotional scriptures, yet it is hoped that regarding this inclination of mine for this work as God-

inspired and God's grace, the learned gentlemen will feel pleased with me, because without God's grace a man has no inclination to make a noble effort. A critical study of the devotional scripture is indeed a work better than the best. Because in this, there has indeed been a recitation of God's Divine attributes, God's transcendental Love. God's devotion, means of attaining Divine Love and finally God's holy Names; this must have undoubtedly resulted in the transmission of some bliss and devotion into my heart, dry and devoid of devotion. We must have a firm belief in the words of a Mahatma devotee that through the remembrance, Kirtana (chanting the names of God loudly) of God's holy Names and attributes, even the sinful heart of a man becomes pure gradually and guileless like that of a child. Kirtana of God's attributes and Names washes out all the sins of the heart leaving nothing behind and the awakening of pure, peaceful and divine sentiments, because of the influence of love, makes his birth and life successful. (The Scripture says) —

' Even if the most sinful individual meditates on the Lord for the twinkling of an eye, he, then getting purified can sanctify again even those persons who purify others. ' *

* महापातकयुक्तोऽपि ध्यायन्निमिषमच्युतम् ।
 पुनस्तपस्वी भवति पङ्क्तिपावनपावनः ॥

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Moreover, whatsoever has been written in this book by way of commentary, all that has been picked up as a gift from the utterances of various saints. Really speaking, there is nothing of mine in it indeed. The readers should, therefore, not look to me but pay attention to the author, the aphorisms and the sentiments of the saints and the scriptures cited by way of commentary under the aphorism concerned.

Like the six schools of philosophy, Bhakti-Sūtra (the treatise containing the aphorisms of Devarṣi Nārada) too has been recognized as a separate school. The devotees call it the seventh school of philosophy. The persons endowed with Jñāna (Knowledge of God in His absolute formless aspect) and Vijñāna (Knowledge of the qualified aspect of God both with form and without form) alone are really speaking genuinely worthy of Divine Love. In the eighty-four aphorisms only the Devarṣi has expounded excellently the commentary on the essence of devotion, its impediments, means to attain devotion, its glory and the glory of the devotees. Certainly, this contains an exposition of devotion to the Divine aspect of God with attributes and a form, but it should never mean that there is any antagonism of this devotion towards Knowledge. Rather, by citing the example of the Gopīs of Vraja, the Devarṣi himself has proved the existence in their mind of the

knowledge about God's majesty. Indeed if there is no knowledge of God whom will then one love ? And this fact is true too that one knows the real condition of the heart — the wishes of the Beloved only on developing a love which is uniform, unceasing, exclusive and immutable. In this book, therefore, one should not imagine any antagonism between Knowledge and Devotion. Even so there is no opposition to Karma (the path of Action) too. The performance of disinterested action for the sake of God has indeed been enjoined and even the devotee who has renounced action altogether can certainly not give up the action in the form of remembrance of the Lord, remaining intoxicated in Divine Love day and night. Therefore, the devotion as described by the Devarṣi contains both the Knowledge and Karma, no doubt they ought to be in conformity with devotion. Dry knowledge and action have no place in it. In this there is bliss and bliss alone everywhere — up and down — outside and inside. The Lord is indeed full of Bliss and in that Bliss alone there is supreme joy. Śruti too expresses this very idea —

‘रसो वै सः । रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वाऽऽनन्दी भवति ।’

Through devotion alone can one have distinctly the blessed vision of that Blissful Lord. Through devotion alone can one attain that *Paramānanda* (Supreme Joy) difficult to be attained by the Ṛṣis, sages and gods. All should, therefore, take recourse to devotion

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alone. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* II.iii.17-24 it is said —

The sun-god rises and sets every day; thus it steals away in vain the life of human beings. Only that much time, which is spent in the talks about Lord Hari, is useful. Mere existence in the world and eating and drinking are of little significance. Do not trees live just as human beings do? Do not the bellows of the blacksmith breathe just as men do? Do not the village animals like dogs and pigs take their food, excrete and urinate? Just as dogs wandering about from door to door suffer lathi-blows, just as the village swine eat refuse, just as a camel eats thorns and just as a donkey simply carries a load, exactly in the same way a human being devoid of the Lord's devotion suffers ignominy from all sides like a dog, enjoys useless objects like a pig, remains unhappy always eating and relishing the painful objects in the form of thorns like a camel and continues to bear the worldly burden like a donkey and weep. The ears of a man, in which enter the snakes in the form of worldly talks instead of the *Līlās* of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa are like mere snake-holes. That tongue, which does not sing the Names and attributes of the Lord, is like the tongue of a frog. That head which does not bow down to Lord

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

Srī Hari, is a mere burden, even though decked with lovely hair and other adornments. The hands which even though adorned with gold ornaments, never offer worship to Srī Hari are like the hands of a dead man. Those human eyes that do not see the sacred images of the Lord are as useless as the eyes on the tail-feathers of a peacock. Those human feet which do not visit holy places dedicated to the Lord (temples and places of pilgrimage) are useless like the trees. A mortal, who has never bathed himself in the dust of the feet of the Lord and never known the fragrance of the sacred Tulasī (Holi Basil) leaves offered at the feet of the Lord, is like one dead even though living. And adamantine indeed is that heart, which does not surge when Srī Hari's Names are being uttered, which does not feel choked and which does not get thrilled with eyes welling up with tears of joy.

In the end, to all the loving devotees of the Lord I make this extremely humble entreaty that all of them together should kindly shower such a blessing on me that my mind like a big black bee should be constantly hovering round the lotus feet of the Lord alone, because a man is subject to fear, grief, desire, humiliation and greed only so long as he does not take

PREFACE

refuge in the blessed feet of the Lord — Says
the *Bhāgavata* —

" A man is subject to fear, grief, covetousness,
ignominy and inordinate greed proceeding
from wealth, house and kinsmen; nay, he is
obsessed with the false sense of mineness
in respect of the same, which is the root of
all sorrow, only so long as he does not take
refuge in Your feet, which secure immunity
from all fear. " * (III. ix. 6)

An humble servant of the loving devotees

Hanumanprasad Lodhar

* तावद्भयं द्रविणगेहसुहृन्निमित्तं
शोकः स्पृहा परिभवो विपुलश्च लोभः ।
तावन्ममेत्यसद्वग्रह आर्तिमूलं
यावन्न तेऽङ्घ्रिमभयं प्रवृणीत लोकः ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० ३ । १ । ६)

"Ah! Blessed is this celestial sage, who, while singing the glory of Lord Viṣṇu (the Wielder of the Sāranga bow) to the accompaniment of his lute, feels not only intoxicated himself but delights the unhappy world as well. " * (Bha. I.vi.39)

Kāraka Puruṣas (instruments of God) appear and dwell upon the earth for the good of the world in the same manner even as God Himself incarnates. To prepare the ground for the sacred sports of the Lord, to bring together appropriate means and accessories for His Līlās, to assist in the pastimes — this is their natural function. Such eminent persons (Mahāpuruṣas), even though liberated but without taking advantage of the liberation, dwell in the world with the Jīvas (embodied souls) for their welfare. Normally their work goes on freely always indeed, but during some special Divine incarnation their activities increase especially. They live their benign life for the loftiest benefit of the world. Altogether devoid of ignorance, egotism, sense of mineness, attachment etc., these eminent persons continue to function like an instrument in the hands of God, the Operator. All their activities are the activities of the Lord alone. Out of such eminent persons Devarṣi Nārada is one. In all the Yugas (Ages), in all the Lokas (worlds),

* अहो देवर्षिर्धन्योऽयं यत्कीर्तिं शार्ङ्गध्वननः।

गायन्मायन्निदं तन्मया रमयत्यातुरं जगत्॥

(श्रीमद्भा० १।६।३९)



Narad ji blessed with vision of Shri Radha

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in all the scriptures, in all the societies and in all the activities Nāradaḥ finds a place. He was present in Satyayuga too; also in the Tretā and Dwāpara yugas and also in this disagreeable Kaliyuga, people say that qualified devotees do have his blessed *darśana* (sight). Right from Goloka, Vaikuṇṭha Loka, Brahma Loka etc. to Tala, Atala etc., down to Pātala, he has an access everywhere. And through the power of yoga, he reaches immediately even far off places wherever he wants to go. His impress is found in all the Śāstras such as the Vedas, *Smṛtis*, *Purāṇas*, *Samhitās*. treatises on Jyotiṣa and music etc. Right from Lord Viṣṇu Himself, Śiva etc. down to the dreadful ogres - all show him honour and respect and repose confidence in him. Devarāja Indra too shows respect to his words and Kayādhu, wife of Hiranyakaśipu, the enemy of gods, too trusting his words regards herself as secure in his Āśrama. Sometimes he is noticed giving instructions on the Supreme Truth to Mahāpuruṣas like Vyāsa, Vālmīki and Śukadeva, whereas at other places he is seen busy in an effort to create dissension and discussion between two parties. Really speaking, he does nothing at all for himself. He starts that very work in which he notices the good of somebody and by which he can present a beautiful scene of the Lord's Līlā. The creation of discussion and dissension by him too is conducive to the welfare of the world and for the fulfilment of

the Lord's Līlā indeed. Because every gesture of his is a gesture of the Lord alone. In reality, he should indeed be regarded as nothing else but the 'mind' of God; on reflecting profoundly on this point it becomes obvious through the grace of God. Some people hold that there have been several different individuals with the name of Nārada. Out of them they regard seven as pre-eminent — (1) Brahmā's mind-born son, (2) maternal uncle of Parvata Rsi, (3) brother of Arundhatī, wife of Vaśiṣṭha, or husband of a woman named Satyavatī, (4) creator of strifes among people by carrying tales from here to there, (5) a member of Kubera's court, (6) one among the eight Dharma-Sāstrīs at the court of Lord Śrī Rāma, and (7) a member of the snake-sacrifice performed by Janamejaya.

In this context we neither want to enter into any controversy whether there was one Nārada or there were several, nor do we have the capability indeed to decide this point after discussing it. No doubt in our view we see only one Nārada who has performed various actions in his capacity as an instrument of God in different Kalpas and Yugas and is still performing them. Here we have to say something about that work of Nāradaḥ which is connected with devotion. And really speaking, this alone is the main work of Nāradaḥ, even though well-versed in all the scriptures and the knower and expounder of all the truths, in the

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end Nāradaġī advises devotion of the Lord alone. He makes eminent Mahatmas like Vālmiki, Vyāsa, Śukadeva, Prahlāda, Dhruva etc. to resort to the Lord's devotion. Not only this much, but with the Viṇā in hand and always chanting the holy Name of God without any fear and any care in all the Yugas and in all the societies, he continues to purify all the men and women of the entire universe and to turn them towards God. This divine Nāradaġī has himself given an account of his life pertaining to two Kalpas.

The above mentioned topic is described very well indeed in the *Bhāgavata* (I.iv.6). For my own delectation as also of the readers, some essential part of it is given below:-

Maharṣi Vyāsaġī endowed with divine sight, divided the Vedas into four parts for the benefit of the humanity. He composed the *Mahābhārata* known as the fifth Veda, replete with innumerable stories. He composed the *puranas*. Thus, even though engaged in doing good to all the human beings, Vyāsa Bhagavān was not satisfied, his mind did not attain complete peace, within himself he continued to feel the lack of something; sitting on the bank of the river Saraswati and feeling rather dejected he then began to reflect thus — 'I have done all that was possible, nevertheless, why am I feeling the lack of something within me ?

Have I not defined in detail the Bhāgavata-dharma? Because Bhāgavata-dharmas alone are dear to the Lord and Paramahansa devotees.' While he was indeed reflecting thus, there appeared Śrī Nārada^{jī} with a smiling countenance singing the praises of Lord Hari. After the exchange of mutual greetings and courtesies, Śrī Vyāsa^{jī} described his mental condition to the Devar^{ṣi} and asked him about its remedy. Thereupon, Śrī Nārada^{jī} commenced as follows :-

"O most excellent Muni! You have not chanted the glories of the Lord in your books in the manner in which you have described the other dharmas. It is for this reason that your mind is filled with depression. Even though soft, sweet and having figurative expressions (possessing poetical fervour) that speech, that poetry, in which the glory and the splendour of Lord Śrī Vāsudeva who can sanctify the world, have not been described, is called by the name of 'Kākatīrtha' (a place of pleasure for crows or a place where crows bathe or wallow) by the learned men who know the real and unreal; in other words, just as the mind of filthy voluptuous men, like the crows that peck at ordure (dung), delights in that poetry, even so the mind of Paramahansa devotees, like the swans abiding on the Manasarovara (lake) never revels in it. On the other hand, even though harsh to the ear, devoid of diction and

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grammatically wrong at every step, that speech which is replete with the Names and eulogies of the Lord, is supremely delightful and capable of wiping out the sins of the people. Therefore, it is that speech full of the Names and praises of the Lord which the Sadhus and Mahatmas love to hear, chant and repeat to an audience. O best of Munis ! You have an unfailing eye, nothing is hidden from you at all. Therefore, you should now describe the Līlās of Śrī Hari for the benefit of the world. The wise have declared that the supreme fruit indeed of man's austerity, practice of hearing, daily religious performances and sharp intellect etc. is to recount with devotion solely the virtues of Śrī Hari alone. After listening to the story of my previous birth, reflect upon it and see what a miraculous change took place in me through the practice of listening to the glories of Śrī Hari.

" O Mahamuni ! In my last birth, I was the son of a maid-servant. Once upon a time many Mahatmas came to our village to spend the four months of the rainy season. I was a small boy. My mother placed me in the service of those Mahāpuruṣas. Before those Mahatmas I enacted no childish frolics of any sort; abandoning all games I used to sit peacefully at their feet and spoke very little indeed. Due to all these reasons those Mahatmas, even though viewing all alike, were particularly pleased with and kind to me. With the willing consent of those

sages, I used to eat whatever was left of their meals on the leaf-plates. As a result of this all my sins were wiped out. Continuing in this manner for some time my mind became purified and as a consequence I developed a liking for their religious creed (Bhāgavada-dharma). There those people used to chant the stories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa daily and with the kindness of those Mahatmas I would listen to their mind-captivating stories with reverence. Thus step by step I developed devotion for the Lord. O Mahāmuni ! Firstly I developed an attraction for the Lord and later my mind got firmly established in Him. As a result of that pure and firm intellect I began to perceive the whole of this gross and subtle world fashioned through *mayā* in my form of pure supreme Brahma and devoid of *mayā*. In this way both throughout the rains and the following autumn, those Mahatmas continued to sing daily the unalloyed glories of God and on listening to which there sprouted in my heart that Sāttwic devotion which eradicates the element of Rajas (passion) and Tamas (ignorance). To me who was devoted to those sages, dependent on them, subduer of the senses, full of faith and regarding me as a sinless child-servant, those saints, compassionate as they were to the afflicted, graciously imparted, when about to depart from the village, that most esoteric wisdom which has been revealed by the Lord Himself; through that wisdom I came to know the glory of that *mayā* of Lord Vāsudeva, by

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knowing which men attain to His Supreme Abode.*

* Following this, very order laid down by Devarṣi Nārada, Śrī Madhusudana Saraswatījī, the eminent commentator of the *Gītā*, has described eleven stages of Devotion in his book entitled *Bhakti-Rasāyana* :-

प्रथमं महतां सेवा तदयापात्रता ततः ।

श्रद्धाथ तेषां धर्मेषु ततो हरिगुणश्रुतिः ॥

ततो रत्यङ्कुरोत्पत्तिः स्वरूपाधिगतिस्ततः ।

प्रेमवृद्धिः परानन्दे तस्याथ स्फुरणं ततः ॥

भगवद्धर्मनिष्ठातः स्वस्मिन्तद्गुणशालिता ।

प्रेम्णोऽथ परमा काष्ठेत्युदिता भक्तिभूमिकाः ॥

(1) Personal service of Mahāpuruṣas leading to (2) acquisition of qualifications for their compassion whence springs (3) faith in their dharma. From faith originates (4) the listening to the Divine glory. From listening sprouts (5) Divine Love. Divine Love leads to (6) Self-realization (realization that one's self is absolutely apart from one's gross and subtle bodies). Self-realization leads to (7) increase of love in *Parānand* (Bhagavān). Increase of love leads to (8) the awakening of *Parmānand*; this leads to (9) firm adherence to Bhāgavata dharma, which in turn brings about (10) the development of the attributes of Bhagavān within oneself and finally (11) the attainment of the highest stage of Love (the attainment of a stage when the separation from the Lord becomes absolutely unendurable). This is how the various stages of Devotion have been described.

"After this the Mahatmas who instructed me in spiritual wisdom left for another place. I continued the practice of Bhajana according to their instructions. I was the only son of my mother and consequently she had great affection for me. She used to regard me alone as the exclusive support. One day a serpent impelled by the angel of death, bit my affectionate mother which brought about her death. Then regarding this incident as compassion showered on me by the Lord who is ever solicitous for the welfare of the devotees, I set out in a northerly direction and having arrived in a dense forest, I sat down on the bank of a river at the foot of a peepul tree and started contemplating with a collected mind on the Lord and His Lotus feet with reverence. At that time overpowered by love as I became, tears of joy filled my eyes and I beheld that Lord Śrī Hari manifested Himself in my heart. Immediately on having a blessed sight of the Lord I was almost flooded with love. The hair on my body stood on end. I was submerged in the ocean of ecstasy and lost consciousness of myself as well as that of the world.

"All of a sudden that supremely lovely and mind-captivating Form of the Lord disappeared. I then felt extremely grieved. I started to attempt again for that blissful sight, when I heard a heavenly voice, 'O child ! In this birth thou shalt not have My *Darsana*. It was only

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to enhance love in thee that I revealed Myself to thee once. Through the glory of Satsanga even for a short while thou hast developed firm devotion for Me. Casting off this body thou shalt become an attendant of Mine, thou shalt have unwavering intellect for Me and through My grace even at the end of the Kalpa thou shalt remember the incidents of this birth.' Thereupon, I regarded myself as one qualified for the Lord's grace and bowed down to Him; and shaking off shyness, remembering and chanting the supremely mysterious and auspicious Names and attributes of the Lord, I began to roam about in the world, contented at heart, giving up egotism and jealousy and rid of all cravings. Fixing my mind on Srī Kṛṣṇa, I abandoned the association with the worldly objects. At the appointed time, that body of mine perished and I attained the form and divine body of a Pārṣada (an attendant of the Lord).

"After that, at the end of the Kalpa, I entered with the ingoing breath the heart of Brahmā when he was to sleep on the ocean of Deluge (dissolution) after having reabsorbed into himself the entire creation. At the end of one thousand Yugas when Brahmā began to create the universe, I was born with his outcoming breath along with Marīchi and other sages.

"Since then, holding to my vow of constant celibacy I move about inside as well as outside the three worlds, as I like. By the grace of God, there is no impediment for me anywhere. Playing upon the *Viṇā*, bestowed upon me by the Lord Himself and endowed with *Brahmā* in the form of sound I go about everywhere singing the attributes of *Srī Hari*. God's compassion on me is so boundless that when I sing the *Līlās* of the Lord in a voice choked with the emotion of love, then at that very moment the Lord of auspicious renown and blessed feet worthy of adoration appears before me and blesses me with His *ḍarsana* in a manner as if some one comes quickly when summoned by somebody.

"Narration of Lord *Srī Hari*'s pastimes is the only veritable raft to cross the ocean of mundane existence for those who become distracted repeatedly with the craving for sense-enjoyments and are attached to the worldly enjoyments. This is why, I roam about always singing the praises of *Srī Hari* for my own welfare as well as that of the people at large. The mind of the lustful men does not attain tranquillity so quickly by resorting to yoga etc. as through the *Bhajana* of Lord *Srī Hari*." Saying this much and singing the praises of *Srī Hari*, *Srī Nārada*jī left the place

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It is stated in the *Mahābhārata* that Devarṣi Nāradaḥ was a knower of the essence of all the Vedas, worthy of veneration by gods, a specialist in *Itihasas* and *puranas*, a knower of the essence of dharma, exceptionally learned in the science of teaching, sacred precepts and grammar, proficient in music, a correct interpreter of the mutually conflicting scriptural injunctions, fully capable of analysing the injunctions, an influential orator, endowed with sharp intellect, a possessor of good memory, skilled in politics, a poet, a man of knowledge, capable of giving thought to a thing by sifting all evidence, capable of removing the doubts of learned men like Brahaspati, a knower of the essence of Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa, capable of seeing directly the entire terrestrial globe from all directions through the power of yoga, a knower of the qualifications for Mokṣa (liberation), capable of raising up a controversy for the sake of (spiritual) welfare, a knower of the principles of peace and war, capable of knowing the core of an action simply by guessing, fully versed in all the Sāstras, an expounder of the laws, a repository of all virtues and infinitely brilliant. He was the embodiment of knowledge, a store-house of learning, the aggregate of bliss, the substratum of righteous conduct, a disinterested lover of all living beings, a natural beneficiary of the universe, the supreme embodiment and Āchārya of Bhakti.

After expounding everything else and making an introductory remark - " अथातो भक्ति व्याख्यास्यामः " Devarṣi Nāradaḥ of such high attainments expounded the essence of devotion in the end. This proves that the place of devotion is very high indeed.

Bowing down at the feet of Devarṣi Nāradaḥ who roams about the three worlds singing the praises of Śrī Hari out of motiveless compassion for the people in this manner, we should try to mould our lives in accordance with his incomparable instructions on devotion supremely dear to him, after reading them carefully.

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THE NATURE OF LOVING DEVOTION

अथातो भक्तिं व्याख्यास्यामः ॥ १ ॥

1. NOW, WE SHALL EXPOUND (THE NATURE OF) DEVOTION (BHAKTI).

It appears from the words 'अथ' and 'अतः' of this aphorism that Devarṣi Nāradaḥ, an Āchārya of the path of devotion, the supreme crest-jewel among devotees, devoted to doing good to all creatures and the ocean of mercy, has indeed completed the exposition of other principles; now, for the welfare of the Jīvas (embodied souls) he starts expounding the nature of the supremely beneficial devotion and the means to attain it. Nāradaḥ says —

सा त्वस्मिन्* परमप्रेमरूपा ॥ २ ॥

2. THAT (DEVOTION) HAS THE FORM OF SUPREME LOVE TOWARDS GOD.

Various kinds of devotion have been described but the devotion which Nāradaḥ expounds has the form of Love. To develop exclusive love indeed for God constitutes devotion. 'Exclusive love' is called that state when the mental inclination, devoid of the support of

* Some read 'कस्मै' for 'त्वस्मिन्'.

spiritual disciplines like Knowledge (Jñāna), Action (Karma) etc. and becoming free from desires for all objects, gets exclusively absorbed in God alone, when the mind withdrawing itself from all the worldly objects and all the enjoyable accessories of the other world (Paraloka), nay, even the pleasure of liberation, remains absorbed solely in the supremely Beloved Lord and the entire sense of mineness and attachment, receding from all the objects altogether, turns solely towards the Beloved Lord.

अमृतस्वरूपा च ॥ ३ ॥

3. AND DEVOTION IS NECTAREAN IN CHARACTER (TOO).

Exclusive love for the Lord alone is nectar in reality; it is the sweetest of all and he who attains this nectarean love, becomes immortal by drinking it. Worldly desires indeed constitute death. In the heart of an exclusively loving devotee no other desire is left at all except an ever-fresh and sacred desire for Divine Love. Due to this desire, which is supremely difficult to attain, he becomes free altogether from the cycle of births and deaths sprung from the bonds of Karma, by becoming an instrument in the Lord's pastimes which fascinate the minds of sages. He ever lives near the Lord and the Lord near him ! This eternal and steady union indeed of

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the loving devotee and the Beloved Lord is real immortality. This is why the devotees long for devotion and not liberation.

"Realizing this, the wise devotees of Śrī Hari spurn final emancipation and remain enamoured of Devotion. " *

(Ra. c. ma. VII.118/7)

यल्लब्ध्वा पुमान् सिद्धो भवति, अमृतो भवति, तृप्तो भवति ॥४॥

4. ON ATTAINING WHICH (DEVOTION HAVING THE NATURE OF SUPREME LOVE AND NECTAR) MAN ATTAINS SIDDHI (PERFECTION); (HE) BECOMES IMMORTAL, (AND) SATISFIED.

He alone who has drunk the nectar of Divine Love is Siddha (perfect). The word 'Siddha' ('सिद्ध') here does not connote a man who has attained super-natural powers like Aṇimā etc. A loving devotee does not long for even the Siddhi in the form of liberation, not to talk about these Siddhis (super-natural powers) These Siddhis are ever in search of an opportunity to serve such a loving devotee, but he does not accept them at all accounting them as extremely trivial in comparison with

* अस बिचारि हरि भगत सयाने । मुक्ति निरादर भगति लुभाने ॥

(रा.च.मा. ७.११८/७)

Divine Love. The Lord Himself says —

" He who has bestowed his mind on Me no more aspires for the position of Brahmā (the highest functionary in the administration of the universe), much less for the realm of the great Indra (the ruler of paradise), still less for sovereignty over the entire globe, rulership of the subterranean worlds or mystic powers acquired through the practice of Yoga, nor does he seek (even) final beatitude (lit., cessation of rebirth for all time to come) divorced from Me."*
(Bha. XI.XIV.14)

A devotee says --

" While engaged in the worship of Beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa this body of mine got thrilled and the mind became overjoyed with devotion. Tears of love adorned my face and faltering

* न पारमेष्ठ्यं न महेन्द्रधिष्यं
न सार्वभौमं न रसाधिपत्यम् ।
न योगसिद्धिरपुनर्भवं वा
मय्यर्पितात्मेच्छति मद्विनान्यत् ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० ११।१४।१४)

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words my throat. Thus I have not a moment's leisure to accept any other enjoyment. Nevertheless, I know not why the four types of liberation like Sāyujya etc. are standing at my door eagerly ardent to serve me as maid-servants." * (Bodha-sāra)

If a devotee accepts the sense-enjoyments and liberation they then consider it as their supreme fortune, but devotees do not do so.

"Siddhis like liberation etc., and various other kinds of wonderful worldly pleasures remain engaged as maid-servants in rendering service to Mahādevī - Devotion to Śrī Hari ". (Nārada - Pāñcharātra) **

* रोमाञ्चेन चमत्कृता तनुरियं भक्त्या मनो नन्दितं
प्रेमाधूणि विभूषयन्ति वदनं कण्ठं गिरो गग्नदाः ।
नास्माकं क्षणमात्रमप्यवसरः कृष्णार्चनं कुर्वतां
मुक्तिर्द्धारि चतुर्विधापि किमियं दास्याय लोलायते ॥
(बोधसार)

** हरिमक्तिमहादेव्याः सर्वा मुक्त्यादिसिद्धयः ।
भुक्तयश्चाद्भुतास्तस्याश्चेटिकावदनुग्रहाः ॥
(नारदपाञ्चरात्र)

Says Kākabhūṣuṇḍijī Mahārāja —

" Just as water cannot stay except on land notwithstanding our best efforts; even so, mark you, O King of the birds, the joy of final beatitude cannot stay apart from Devotion to Śrī Hari. " *

(Ra. c. ma. VII.118/5,6)

Therefore, here 'Siddhi' should be understood to mean 'accomplishment of one's supreme object'. A devotee does not feel the want of anything. On attaining the love of the Beloved Lord, he becomes contented altogether. This contentment alone constitutes his becoming immortal. So long as a man does not become accomplished of purpose or contented, till then he has repeatedly to undergo the cycle of births and deaths under the Law of Karma. A contented devotee regards death as mere sport by experiencing directly both creation and dissolution as pastimes of the Lord. In fact, to

*

जिमि थल बिनु जल रहि न सकाई ।

कोटि भौंति कोउ करै उपाई ॥

तथा मोच्छ सुख सुनु खगराई ।

रहि न सकइ हरि भगति बिहाई ॥

(RT. च. मा. ७.११८/५, ६)

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him death indeed becomes dead. Except the pastimes of the Lord no terrible thing called death is left at all in his ken and this is why he becomes sated. So long as the worldly objects have any existence apart from the Lord's Lilās till then alone a man remains unsatisfied desiring constantly new and newer pleasurable objects regarding the former as pleasant or painful. When he attains the original fountain of all, their real and complete form, then his mind indeed does not go towards those fragmentary and incomplete objects. Attaining the whole he becomes satisfied.

यत्प्राप्य न किञ्चिद्वाञ्छति न शोचति न द्वेष्टि न रमते
नोत्साही भवति ॥ ५ ॥

5. ON ATTAINING WHICH (DEVOTION IN THE FORM OF LOVE), MAN DOES NOT DESIRE ANYTHING AT ALL, DOES NOT GRIEVE, DOES NOT HATE, DOES NOT GET ATTACHED TO ANYTHING AND HE DOES NOT FEEL ENTHUSED FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF SENSE-ENJOYMENTS.

That loving devotee attains that supremely eminent object, on attaining which all desires become dead. All the objects of the world like love, suzerainty, beauty, power, fame, knowledge, dispassion etc. for which all the

men whether voluptuary or renunciant ever remain covetous according to their own liking are extremely insignificant in comparison to Divine Love - an object difficult to attain. If all the aforesaid objects spread throughout the universe are collected together at one place even then all of them together are indeed like a drop of the ocean in the form of the Lord and that Lord Himself ever remains attracted towards that Love as compared to which the objects of the world count for little or nothing at all.

Says Sage Śrī Śukadeva —

" What use can he have for the shallow ditch-water (in the shape of heavenly and other trivial enjoyments), who sports in an ocean of nectar, blessed as he is with devotion to the Almighty Śrī Hari, the bestower of final beatitude ? " *

(Bha. VI.xii.22)

Why should the devotee submerged in the ocean of the nectar of love desire other objects ?

Just as a devotee does not desire worldly enjoyments, liberation etc., even so he does

* यस्य भक्तिर्भगवति हरौ निःश्रेयसेश्वरे ।

विक्रीडतोऽमृताम्भोद्यौ किं क्षुद्रैः खातकोदकैः ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० ६ । १२ । २२)

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not feel sorry too at their loss. He regards the loss of the worldly enjoyments as a pastime of the Lord, therefore, he ever - in all circumstances - remains happy indeed. But if during the practice of Divine Love there is a deficiency in the attainment of Sāyujya Mokṣa (liberation in which a devotee gets identified with God) he then does not grieve even for that; rather, he ever longs only this that his love for the Lord may continue to grow, even though he may have to undergo many births. (Says Tulasidasji in the *Vinaya-Patrikā* - 103) :-

"I crave not for anything — liberation, wisdom, wealth, prosperity, supernatural powers or plentiful praise. Let my motiveless love for Śrī Rama's blessed feet grow from more to more every day, I want only this much ". *

Similarly he never hates any Jiva, or any object or circumstances which are regarded as disagreeable from the worldly point of view. Seeing his Lord in all the Jīvas and His Līlās in all the objects and circumstances, he feels

* **चहों न सुगति सुमति संपति कछु रिधि-सिधि विपुल बढ़ाई ।
हेतुरहित अनुरागु रामपद बहु अनुदिन अधिकाई ॥**

rejoiced every moment. (Says Tulasidasji) --

" They look upon the whole world as full of their Lord; against whom can they harbour animosity ? " * (Ra. ca. ma. VII.112)

A devotee's mind remains always so absorbed in Divine Love that even for half a moment it does not revel in any other object. The Gopīs say to Uddhavajī --

" O Uddhava, we do not have ten or twenty minds., There was one but that went away with Śyāma (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), (now) who will propitiate God ? " **

The mind of a devotee does not indeed stay with him; how then will it revel in something else ? This is indeed why the name of the loving devotee's Lord is 'Manachora' (Captivator of the mind). (Sings Surdas) --

" Śyāma (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) the Lover is our thief; His sweet Form has stolen our mind by a mere askance glance of His ". ***

* निज प्रभुमय देखहि जगत केहि सन करहि विरोध ॥
(रा.च.मा. ७.११२)

** ऊधो, मन न भए दस जीस ।

एक हतो सो गयो स्याम सँग, को आराधै ईस ॥

*** मझुकर स्याम हमारे चोर ।

मन हर लियो माधुरी मूरति, निरख नयनकी कोर ॥

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He makes a loving devotee's mind His own affluence by stealing it so skilfully that nobody can ever even cast a glance at it. If somebody else happens to be seen, only then can attachment or love develop for him, but when even the thought of another can find no room in the mind, how then is one to have attachment or fondness for another ? The love-intoxicated Gopis have said —

" Śyāma (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) is the body, Śyāma is the mind, Śyāma is our wealth; O Uddhava, all the eight Yāmas (one Yāma is equal to a period of three hours) we have to deal with Śyāma alone. Śyāma is in our heart, Śyāma is our life and without Śyāma no existence we have, like a blind man's staff the Name of Śyāma is our support. Śyāma is our goal, Śyāma is our intellect, Śyāma alone is our lord, in Śyāma, the Bestower of happiness and the abode of splendour lies our good. O Uddhava, you went mad and came running with (His) message, where shall we install yoga when Śyāma abides in every pore of our body ? " *

* स्याम तन स्याम मन स्याम है हमारो धन,
 आठों जाम ऊधौ हमें स्याम ही सों काम है ।
 स्याम हिये स्याम जिये स्याम बिनु नाहिं तिये,
 आँधेकी-सी लाकरी अधार स्याम नाम है ॥
 स्याम गति स्याम मति स्याम ही है प्रानपति,
 स्याम सुखदाईसों भलाई सोभाधाम है ।
 ऊधौ तुम भए बौरे पाती लैके आए दौरे,
 जोग कहाँ राखैं यहाँ रोम-रोम स्याम है ॥

How can then there be any enthusiasm at all for the attainment of any other object, when even the admission of another person into the mind, except the one Beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa is forbidden? One can only strive for an object when one sees it, listens to it or a desire for it awakens in the mind. When the mind revels in something then only there can be enthusiasm to attain it. The mind has already become some one else's; He has got a complete hold over the mind and entering into it Himself He has made it a permanent abode. There is no room left at all for anybody else; if some one does happen to come, he is forced to go back from a distance alone. What to do, no space at all is left?

(Sings a devotee) —

" Śrī Hari is dwelling in every pore, not even the least room is left over. " *

Whom can the poor eyes see without the assent of the mind? When nobody is seen at all anywhere, the question of enthusiasm to attain it does not arise at all.

There is another point - enthusiasm awakens in a man along with the desire for some pleasure. When one possesses the

* रोम रोम हरि रमि रहे, रही न तनिकौ छोर ।

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repository of all the pleasures indeed, how can then there be zeal for transient pleasures? This is why no ardour at all for worldly activities - for worldly enjoyments is noticed in the loving devotees of the Lord, who are the embodiments of loving enthusiasm. The Lord Himself has said :-

" He, who neither rejoices nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, and who renounces both good and evil actions and is full of devotion, is dear to me. " * *Gītā* XII.17

यज्ज्ञात्वा मत्तो भवति स्तब्धो भवति आत्मारामो भवति ॥६॥

6. KNOWING (ATTAINING) WHICH (DEVOTION IN THE FORM OF SUPREME LOVE) MAN BECOMES SOT-LIKE, BENUMBED AND A REVELLER IN HIS OWN SELF.

Immediately on its manifestation, Divine Love makes a man mad; therefore, a loving devotee, ever intoxicated with love remains absorbed day and night in singing, listening to and dwelling upon the glories of the Lord alone. He has no consciousness at all of the other

* यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥

(गीता १२ । १७)

external things. Just as a mad man talks and acts in the way he likes, even so that love-intoxicated devotee too remains absorbed in talking about the Lord alone because this alone is pleasing to his mind. It is said in the *Srīmad Bhāgavata* XI.ii.39, 40 —

" (Therefore) hearing of the most auspicious descents and deeds of Śrī Hari (The Wielder of the discus) and singing His Names denoting His descents and actions, well-known in the world, without any fear of being mocked at, one should move about free from attachment. The man who, having adopted such a course of conduct, develops love for Him by singing the Names of his beloved Lord, his heart melting in devotion, loudly laughs and weeps, screams, sings or dances like one possessed, transgressing conventions. " *

Thus behaving like an intoxicated person, a loving devotee being filled with joy sometimes keeps silent; sits down peacefully. This stupor gives an indication of his complete accomplishment of his desires. The Form of the Lord has manifested Itself in his heart and

* शृण्वन् सुभद्राणि रथाङ्गपाणेर्जन्मानि कर्माणि च यानि लोके ।
 गीतानि नामानि तदर्थकानि गायन् विलज्जो विचरेदसङ्गः ॥
 एवम्रतः स्वप्रियनामकीर्त्या जातानुरागो द्रुतचित्त उच्चैः ।
 हसत्यथो रोदिति रौति गायत्युन्मादवन्मृत्यति लोकबाह्यः ॥

(भागवत ११ । २ । ३९-४०)

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intoxicated with joy at His sweet charms the devotee becomes submerged in meditation.

Describing the condition of Sutikṣṇa, says Goswami Tulasidas —

" The sage sat motionless in the middle of the road, his body bristling like a jack-fruit with its hair standing on end. " *

(Ra. ca. ma. III.9/15)

Such indeed is the condition of a devotee when he becomes identified with the Lord through incessant dancing. His mind and body become completely benumbed — peaceful. The soul gets filled with Bliss. Such a person alone is called Ātmārāma (one who revels in the self). In this self-revelling state, the craving for worldly objects indeed is left nowhere at all - ** (Siva-Mahimna Stotra 8)

No consciousness at all of anything else is left. This alone is Premādwaita (प्रेमाद्वैत = identification through love) or Rasādwaita (रसाद्वैत = identification through Bliss). Getting identified with the Beloved (Lord) a loving devotee loses even his separate existence.

* मुनि मग माझ अचल होइ वैसा । पुलक सरीर पनस फल जैसा ॥
(रा.च.मा. ३.६/१५)

** न हि स्वात्मारामं विषयमृगतृष्णा भ्रमयति ॥

(शिवमहिम्नस्तोत्र , ८)

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सा न कामयमाना निरोधरूपत्वात् ॥ ७ ॥

7. THAT (LOVING DEVOTION) IS NOT DESIRE-YOKED BECAUSE ITS NATURE IS THAT OF RESTRAINT.

This loving devotion is the form of renunciation altogether. Not to say about wealth, progeny, fame, swarga (heaven) etc. even the desire for liberation cannot exist in this. That devotion, in the exchange of which something is demanded or there is an expectation or desire to gain something, is desire-yoked, nay, it is a selfish transaction. In loving devotion indeed a devotee does not want anything at all other than his Beloved Lord and rendering service to Him. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* III.xxix.13 Lord Kapiladeva says —

" My devotees accept not, in exchange for My service, (the five forms of final beatitude, viz: *Sālokya* (residence in My divine realm), *Sarṣṭi* (enjoying My powers),

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Sāmīpya (living in My presence), Sārūpya (possessing a form similar to Mine) and Sāyujya (absorption into My Being), even when they are offered to them (by Me). " *

* सालोक्यसार्ष्टिसामीप्यसारूप्यैकत्वमप्युत ।

दीयमानं न गृह्णन्ति विना मत्सेवनं जनाः ॥

(भा० ३/२६/१३)

The five kinds of liberation are given below :-

1. Sālokya - the attainment of a Loka similar to that of the Lord.
2. Sārṣṭi - the attainment of powers similar to that of the Lord.
3. Sāmīpya - the attainment of a place near the Lord.
4. Sārūpya - the attainment of a form similar to that of the Lord.
5. Sāyujya - the attainment of complete identification with the Lord.

On the awakening of real devotion desires do indeed perish. Because that devotion has restraint as its nature i.e. it is replete with renunciation. What is that restraint (Nirodha)?

निरोधस्तु लोकवेदव्यापारन्यासः ॥ ८ ॥

8. RENUNCIATION OF (ALL) THE WORLDLY AND VEDIC ACTIVITIES IS CALLED NIRODHA (RESTRAINT).

In loving devotion such renunciation of activities comes about by itself. The love-intoxicated devotee does not know anything other than his Beloved Lord; his mind ever remains absorbed in the Form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The beautiful Form of his Beloved Lord alone ever remains before his eyes everywhere. His mind indeed does not go to any other object. The blessed Gopīs had told the Lord —

" (O Beloved) Our mind, which found delight (heretofore) in the home, has been easily lured away by You; and our hands too, that remained engaged in household duties, have been robbed of their capacity for work. Our feet (likewise) do not recede even a step from the soles of Your feet. How, then, can we return to Vraja or (even if we manage somehow to go there) what (useful

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work) shall we do there (when our mind and other internal organs have ceased functioning altogether) ? " * (Bha.X.xxix.34)

Owing to the picture of the world getting effaced from his mind, that devotee does not remain capable of performing any worldly (based on a Smṛti) and vèdic (enjoined by Śruti) activities at all. They become rid of him automatically. Describing the condition of such a loving devotee Sunderdasji says —

" A loving devotee has no sense of shame relating to the three worlds (Lokas) nor does he follow the vedic injunctions; he fears not ghosts and evil spirits, nor does he feel frightened of gods and demigods. His ears he lends to none, nor does he look at other desirable objects; he talks about nobody else, these are the characteristics of loving devotion. Now he laughs, gets up to dance and then he begins

* चित्तं सुखेन भवतापहतं गृहेषु
यन्निर्विशत्युत करावपि गृह्यकृत्ये ।
पादौ पदं न चलतस्तत्र पादमूलाद्
यामः कथं ब्रजमथो कर्वाम किं वा ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० १० । २९ । ३४)

to weep; sometimes his voice gets choked and he can talk no more. Sometimes his heart is in raptures and he sings in a very loud tone; sometimes becoming speechless he bears the appearance of the firmament. His reasoning faculty, - his only asset having got absorbet in Sri Hari, how could he care to pay attention to anything else? These are the marks of loving devotion hearken, O disciple, says Sundara. " *

* न काज तीन लोककी, न वेदको कसौ करै ।
 न संक भूत-प्रेतकी, न देव-जच्छते डरै ॥
 सुनै न कान और की, ब्रसै न और दृच्छना ।
 कहै न बात और की, सुभक्ति प्रेमलच्छना ॥
 कबहुँक हँसि उठि नृत्य करै रोवन फिर लागे ।
 कबहुँक गदगद कंठ, सबद निकसैं नहि आगे ॥
 कबहुँक हृदै उमंग बहुत ऊँचे सुर गावै ।
 कबहुँक है मुख मौन गगन जैसो रहि जावै ॥
 चित्त वित्त हरिसों छग्यो सावधान कैसे रहै ।
 यह प्रेमलच्छना भक्ति है, शिष्य सुनो, 'सुन्दर' कहै ॥

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तस्मिन्ननन्यता तद्विरोधिषूदासीनता च ॥ ९ ॥

9. EXCLUSIVE SENTIMENT TOWARDS THAT BELOVED LORD AND INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS AN OBJECT UNFAVOURABLE TO HIM ARE ALSO CALLED NIRODHA.

When a devotee remains in the condition of outward consciousness and maintains an exclusive sentiment towards his Beloved, he (then) remains altogether indifferent towards the activities disagreeable to Him. Actions performed with such a caution too constitute Nirodha. Every gesture made by a loving devotee is favourable to his Beloved and is meant for His service only with an exclusive sentiment. Just as the sun cannot cause darkness anywhere or death cannot occur through nectar, even so an unfavourable gesture indeed is never practised by him.

अन्याश्रयाणां त्यागोऽनन्यता ॥ १० ॥

10. RENUNCIATION OF ALL PROPS (OTHER THAN HIS BELOVED LORD) IS CALLED EXCLUSIVENESS.

In the mind of a loving devotee even the idea about the existence of some one else other than his Beloved Lord does not exist, how then is he to adore another? He indeed regards the entire universe both animate and inanimate

as the body of his Beloved; he sees nothing else anywhere.

" A woman of the best type is convinced in her heart of hearts that she cannot even dream in this world of a man other than her lord. " * (Ra. ca. ma. III.iv.12)

Says Rahim — a muslim poet-saint — (Abdur-Rahim Khān-i-Khānā) :-

" That the sweet form of the Beloved has filled the eyes to such an extent that no room at all is left for any other form —

" The Form of the Beloved abides in the eyes, where is the room for the form of another ? Seeing the inn full, O Rahim, the traveller himself goes back. " **

Describing the Gopis' mental disposition which saw Śyāma everywhere, the poet Śrīdeva has said —

" A fathomless ocean of ink surged all of a sudden, and in it all the three worlds got

* उत्तम के अस बस मन माहीं ।

सपनेहुँ आन पुरुष जग नाहीं ॥ (रा.च.मा. ३.४।१२)

** प्रीतम-छवि नैनन असी, पर छवि कहाँ समाय ।

अरी सराय 'रहीम' छवि, आप पथिक फिरि जाय ॥

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submerged in one sweep. Words in black and black alone written on beautiful black paper - who is to decipher and examine them separately and that too when the mind is not in a mood? Darkness has enveloped the eyes like the dark Amāvasyā (*) night. A drop of water of the Jambu (**) river has lost its identity in the waves of the Jamuna. Likewise, O friend, my mind has lost its worth to me. Having assumed the hue of Śyāma (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), it has merged into the colour of Śyāma (and therefore cannot be distinguished from Him). " ***

(*) The last day of the dark fortnight of a lunar month.

(**) A celestial river whose waters are said to be bluish in colour.

*** औचक अगाध सिंधु स्याहीकौ उमड़ि आयो,
तामें तीनों लोक बूड़ि गये एक संगमें ।
कारे-कारे आखर लिखे जु कारे कागद सु
न्यारे करि बाँचे कौन जाँचे चितभंगमें ॥
आँखिनमें तिमिर अमावसकी रैन जिमि,
जंबूनद-बुंद जमुना-जल-तरंगमें ।
यों ही मन मेरो मेरे कामकौ न रह्यो माई,
स्याम रँग है करि समानो स्याम रंगमें ॥

If anybody talks to him about some one else, he then either does not want to listen to it or the words do not enter his ears. If at some time he does have to listen to it under compulsion his mind then is not attracted at all towards it. When the seven Ṛṣis asked Goddess Pārvatī, an exclusive worshipper of Lord Śiva to withdraw her mind from Him by pointing out innumerable defects of Lord Mahādevajī and to apply it to Lord Viṣṇu endowed with all virtues, the Goddess, the very embodiment of Lord Śiva's Love, then replied—

" As for myself I must wed Sambhu or remain a virgin, no matter if I have to continue the struggle for ten million lives. " *

" The great god Śiva may be full of faults and Viṣṇu may be a repository of all virtues. One is, however, concerned with him alone who gladdens one's heart. " **

* जन्म कोटि लुगि रगर हमारी ।

बरउँ संभु न त रहउँ कुअरी ॥ (रत्न. च. मा. १. ८०/५)

** महादेव अवगुन भवन विष्णु सकल गुन घाम ।

जेहि कर मनु रम जाहि सन तेहि तेही सन काम ॥

(रत्न. च. मा. १. ८०)

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In this very manner the Gopīs too told Uddhava Ji —

" O Uddhava ! This matter rests entirely on one's own choice. Abandoning the nectarean fruits like dried grapes and dates, the insect bred in poison will feed on poison alone. If anybody offers camphor to Chakora (moon-bird), it will reject it and feel sated with embers. The black bee which is capable of making its home even in dry timber becomes imprisoned within lotus petals (capable though it is of boring through them). Just as the moths cling to candle flame accounting it as their object of love, even so, says Surdas, one feels gratified with that alone in whom one's mind is engrossed. " *

Thus a loving devotee performs all his activities for his Beloved Lord alone, knowing Him alone, regarding Him alone as his all-in-all and taking the shelter of the Lord alone just as a fish has simply water as its refuge.

* ऊधौ ! मन मानेकी बात ।

दाख छोहारा छाड़ि अमृतफल विषकीरा विष खात ॥

जो चकोरको दै कपूर कौउ तजि अंगार अघात ।

मधुप करत घर कोरे काठमें बँधत कमलके पात ॥

ज्यों पतंग हित जान आपनो, दीपकसों लपटात ।

‘सुरदास’ जाको मन जासों, ताको सोह सुहात ॥

" He is my one and only support, one and only strength, one and only hope and one and only object of my faith; Tulasidas says that he is like a Chataka (rain-bird) for the sake of his one and only Rāma Ghanaśyāma (Rāma with the hue of a dark cloud). " *

Like the vow of a Chāataka, keeping his mind engrossed solely in the Lord alone and depending entirely upon Him alone, he maintains his body for Him alone. All his activities like eating and drinking, sleeping and sitting, walking and rambling, receiving and giving, charitable and virtuous acts are for Him alone. Therefore, all his actions due to their being accomplished with the sentiment of exclusive love towards the Lord are indeed naturally full of spiritual welfare.

लोके वेदेषु तदनुकूलाचरणं तद्विरोधिषूदासीनता ॥११॥

11. OUT OF THE WORLDLY AND VEDIC ACTIVITIES THE PERFORMANCE ONLY OF THOSE AGREEABLE TO THE LORD CONSTITUTES INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS THE OBJECTS DISAGREEABLE TO HIM.

* एक भरोसो एक जल, एक आस विसवास ।
एक राम घनस्याम हित चातक 'तुलसीदास' ॥

In the case of one who performs the actions exclusively for the Lord, renunciation of the actions disagreeable to the Lord comes about by itself indeed. He cannot perform any act at all, whether vedic or worldly (Śrauta or Smārta) which is not agreeable to the Lord, that is, which renders no help in the growth of loving devotion.

In accordance with the vedas and the universally accepted rules it is an obligatory duty on the part of a son to obey his parents, and a wife to obey the husband and on a disciple to obey the preceptor; but if their order too is against Divine Love, a loving devotee then renounces it, even though he has to suffer; because the performance through him of an activity disagreeable to the Beloved is impossible.

Citing an illustration Goswamiji Maharaja has said —

" Abandon him, to whom Śrī Rāma and Śrī Sita (Princess of Videh territory) are not dear, like the worst enemy even though he may be supremely affectionate. Prahlāda abandoned the father, Bibhīṣaṇa his brother, Bharata his mother, Bali his preceptor, the Gopīs (damsels of Vraja) their husbands

— all of them became beneficent to the world. " *

Prahlāda did not carry out the father's orders hostile to the Lord, Bibhiṣaṇa gave up the association with the brother, Bharataji ignored the mother's order, King Bali did not listen to the advice of his preceptor Śukrāchārya and the Gopīs (damsels of Vraja) paid no attention to the orders of their husbands and all of them proved (themselves) beneficial to the world.

There are four kinds of Karmas (actions) — (1) Nitya - usual; (2) Naimittika - occasional; (3) Kāmya - desirable; and (4) Niṣiddha — prohibited. Prohibited actions like the use of wine and meat, theft, adultery etc. are to be renounced by one and all. Desirable actions sanctioned by the Sāstras (performed with a motive), owing to their being a cause for bondage and involving one in a cycle of births and deaths, are to be renounced according to the Lord's statement (in the *Gītā*. XVIII.2) —

* जाके प्रिय न राम बैदेही ।

तजिये ताहि कोटि बैरीसम जबपि परमसनेही ॥

पिता तज्यो प्रह्लाद, विभीषन बंधु भरत महतारी ।

बलि गुर तज्यो, कंत ब्रजवनितनि, भए जग मंगलकारी ॥

(विनय पत्रिका १७४)

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं — 'renunciation of actions motivated by desire'. As for the remaining Nitya (usual) and Naimittika (occasional) actions, they should be performed only with the object of affording pleasure to the Lord in accordance with the commands of the Lord and in accordance with the procedure laid down by the worldly conventions and the vedas renouncing the attachment to their fruit. Only those actions which are conducive to the growth of Divine Love are regarded as affording pleasure to the Lord. To perform actions agreeable to the Lord with one's mind, speech and body, abandoning the attachment and expectation of fruit according to the *Gītā* and to renounce the disagreeable actions indeed constitute indifference towards the hostile actions. So long as the intoxicated condition of loving devotion is not attained, such actions as are agreeable to the Lord continue to be performed naturally indeed by a loving devotee.

भवतु निश्चयदाह्यादूर्ध्वं शास्त्ररक्षणम् ॥१२॥

12. EVEN AFTER HAVING MADE A FIRM DETERMINATION (IN ONE'S MIND TO ATTAIN TRANSCENDENTAL LOVE BEYOND THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPERATIVES) ONE SHOULD FOLLOW THE *ŚĀSTRAS*. THAT IS TO SAY, ONE SHOULD PERFORM SHASTRAIC ACTIONS AGREEABLE TO THE LORD.

In the achieved state of love unconscious of the external objects and beyond the positive and negative imperatives, the renunciation of worldly and vedic activities comes about by itself, it is not practised deliberately.

Therefore, so long as that state of love which makes one forget everything is not attained, till then, the activities enjoined by the Sāstras should never be renounced in the name of love. By practising continuously indeed the usual and occasional (Nitya-Naimittika) actions agreeable to the Lord and Bhajana in the form of listening to and chanting etc. His glories in accordance with the Sāstras and with a view to dedicate them to the Lord, one attains that supreme Divine Love. The Lord Himself enjoins —

" Therefore, the scripture alone is your guide in determining what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing this, you ought to perform only such action as is ordained by the scriptures." *Gītā* XVI.24. *

* तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥

(गीता १६ । २४)

अन्यथा पातित्याशङ्कया ॥१३॥

13. OTHERWISE THERE IS THE FEAR OF A FALL.

That man, who, deliberately violating the Shastraic injunctions, performs improper actions in opposition to the Sāstras and wants to be free of evils by giving them the name of love, falls undoubtedly indeed. The Lord Himself has said —

" Having cast aside the injunctions of the scriptures, he who acts in an arbitrary way according to his own sweet will neither attain perfection nor the supreme goal nor even happiness. " * *Ġitā*.XVI.23

To renounce the Shastraic actions deliberately does not constitute the ideal of love, it is delusion, it is indiscipline and license. Consequently such an individual gets demoniacal forms of existence hell and suffering alone.

* यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥

(गीता १६ । २३)

लोकोऽपि तावदेव किन्तु भोजनादिव्यापारस्त्वा-

शरीरधारणावधि ॥ १४ ॥

14. WORLDLY ACTIONS TOO SHOULD BE PERFORMED IN CONFORMITY WITH THE SCRIPTURES TILL THEN (*i.e.* TILL THERE IS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE EXTERNAL OBJECTS) WHEREAS ACTIONS LIKE TAKING FOOD ETC. WILL CONTINUE TO BE PERFORMED TILL THE BODY LASTS.

Along with the vedic rites, actions pertaining to the worldly livelihood and a householder's life etc. too should be performed with care in accordance with the procedure agreeable to the Lord. No doubt there is in fact such an achieved state (*) having no knowledge of external objects in which the vedic and worldly activities drop off easily indeed;

(*) Here the achieved state having no knowledge of the external objects should not be understood to mean 'Bhāva-Samādhi' (an ecstatic trance). It is that most successful state of love in which no 'external' object at all remains except the Beloved Lord. Only when the knowledge of the 'externals' other than that of the Lord vanishes entirely, this state resulting from the attainment of a stage beyond the positive and negative imperatives is reached.

but till the attainment of that state both kinds of actions should be performed regularly. But in that state resulting from the attainment of a stage beyond the positive and negative imperatives they will drop off by themselves. But even in that state activities like taking food etc. will continue. The reason being that they are essential for the body. Even though the love-intoxicated devotee makes no effort for his food etc. yet he continues to get his food through the dispensation of the Lord who personally attends to his needs. Undoubtedly that is Divine Prasāda (edible objects which have been offered to the Lord) indeed.

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तल्लक्षणानि वाच्यन्ते नानामतभेदात् ॥ १५ ॥

15. CHARACTERISTICS OF THAT DEVOTION ARE NOW BEING STATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS.

Different Āchāryas have described the form of devotion in different ways. After narrating them first Devarṣi Nārada wishes to express his views later.

पूजादिष्वनुराग इति पाराशर्यः ॥ १६ ॥

16. ACCORDING TO ŚRĪ VYĀSAJĪ, SON OF PARĀŚARA, DEVOTION CONSISTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFECTION FOR THE LORD'S WORSHIP ETC.

A devotee should regard his body, mind and wealth as accessories for the worship of the Lord and worship the Lord's image or the Lord in the form of the universe in the prescribed manner with the three of them with supreme faith. On the mind getting attached to the Lord's worship, it gets detached by itself from the worldly objects involving bondage.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING DEVOTION 61 AND EXAMPLES

Worship of the Lord should be performed both externally and internally indeed. By worshipping the Lord a devotee attains the supreme abode of the Lord —

On the surface of this earth those men, who worship the Lord, attain the eternal, blissful and supreme abode of the Lord.¹
(Viṣṇu-Rahasya) *

कथादिष्विति गर्गः ॥ १७ ॥

17. ACCORDING TO GARGĀCHĀRYA'S DOCTRINE DEVOTION CONSISTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFECTION ALONE FOR THE STORIES ETC. OF THE LORD.

To apply one's mind in listening to and chanting the Divine pastimes, glories, His attributes and Names is undoubtedly the chief characteristic of devotion. Most of the people in the world are such as have nothing at all to do with the Lord and His stories. Their life passes away in talking about the worldly objects

* श्रीविष्णोरर्चनं ये तु प्रकुर्वन्ति नरा भुवि ।
ते यान्ति शाश्वतं विष्णोरानन्दं परमं पदम् ॥

(विष्णुरहस्य)

day and night. Neither they ever chant the attributes of God, nor do they find the talks about God tolerable. (Says Tulasidasji) —

' Their ears have no affection for listening to the stories of Śrī Rāma. ' *

In such circumstances those men whose mind remains engaged in listening to and talking about the eulogies of the Lord are certainly devotees. The author of the aphorisms Āchārya Śrī Nāradaġi has himself said to Mahārṣi Veda-Vyāsa —

" The wise have declared that the abiding purpose of man's austere penance, sacred knowledge, sacrificial performances, recitation of the Vedas with correct intonation, enlightenment and bestowal of gifts is to recount the virtues of that Lord of excellent fame. " ** (Bha. I.v.22)

* श्रवणं न रामकथां श्रुतरागी ।

** इदं हि पुंसस्तपसः श्रुतस्य वा
 सिष्टस्य सूक्तस्य च बुद्धिदत्तयोः ।
 अविच्युतोऽर्थः कविभिर्निरूपितो
 यदुत्तमश्लोकगुणानुवर्णनम् ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० १ । ५ । २२)

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING DEVOTION 63 AND EXAMPLES

In the *Rāmacharitamānasa* it is said --

" The story of Rāma is the lovely clap of hand-palms, which scares away the birds of doubt. " * (I.113/1)

" To him who seeks to cross the ocean of worldly existence, the narrative of Srī Rāma serves as a secure bark. " ** (VII.52/3)

Therefore, real affection for the stories of the Lord constitutes devotion and through this devotion, one does indeed attain God-realization for certain.

आत्मरत्यविरोधेनेति शाण्डिल्यः ॥ १८ ॥

18. IN THE OPINION OF SAGE ŚĀNDILYA DEVOTION CONSISTS IN HAVING AN AFFECTION FOR THE OBJECTS IN CONFORMITY WITH DELIGHT IN THE SELF ALONE.

Delight in the self connotes remaining absorbed in the form of the Pure self alone

* राम कथा सुंदर करतारी । संसय बिहग उड़ावनिहारी ॥
(रा. च. मा. १.११३/१)

** भवसागर चह पार जो पावा । रामकथा ता कहँ हृद नावा ॥
(रा. च. मा. ७.५२/३)

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without a break; to remain ever established in the self-delight alone is called devotion by those eminent persons who worship God in the unmanifested form. Śrī Śankarāchārya has said —

" Devotion indeed is the more important factor leading to liberation. Quest for one's own self is called devotion." *

The Lord alone abides in each and every living being in the form of the Self, therefore, to have fondness for that Sarvātmā (All-pervading soul) is really speaking devotion of the Lord alone. And there is no doubt about the attainment of liberation by a person practising such devotion.

नारदस्तु तदर्पिताखिलाचारिता तद्विस्मरणे परमव्याकुलतेति ॥

19. ACCORDING TO DEVARṢI NĀRADA, HOWEVER, DEVOTION CONSISTS ONLY IN DEDICATING ALL ONE'S ACTIVITIES TO THE LORD AND FEELING EXTREMELY RESTLESS IN FORGETTING HIM EVEN SLIGHTLY.

Nāradaḥ is not opposed at all to the characteristics of devotion stated by Maharṣi

* मोक्षकारणसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ।
स्वस्वरूपानुसन्धानं भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ॥

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING DEVOTION 65 AND EXAMPLES

Vyāsa, Garga and Śāṇḍilya. To worship the Lord, to sing the glories of the Lord and to love the Lord in the form of the All-pervading soul are proper and necessary. It was indeed Śrī Nārada himself who had persuaded Vyāsajī to sing the glories of God. Not in order, therefore, to refute those characteristics or to describe them as insignificant but to strengthen them even further Nārada^{jī}, specifying a characteristic of devotion which is complete in all respects and possessing all the above characteristics, says that the uninterrupted remembrance of the Beloved Lord having dedicated all one's activities (vedic and worldly) to the Lord and becoming extremely restless if there is a loss of His remembrance (the Beloved is forgotten) even for a moment alone constitute devotion endowed with all the characteristics. Attachment to His adoration and stories and fondness for the Lord as the Universal Soul are indeed included in it. In the *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* (VI.46, 47), among the yogis of all classes the Lord has declared the devotee-yogi possessing these characteristics as the best of all —

" The yogi is superior to the ascetics; he is regarded as superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The yogi is also superior to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a yogi. "

" Of all yogis, again, he who devoutly worships Me with his mind focussed on Me

is considered by Me to be the best yogi." *
(*Gītā*, VI.46, 47)

Again the Lord has enjoined —

" Therefore, Arjuna, think of Me at all times and fight. With mind and reason thus set on Me, you will doubtless come to Me." **
(*Gītā*, VIII.7)

Without caring for honour and dishonour, gain and loss, victory and defeat, pleasure and pain etc.; abandoning the attachment and the desire for fruit, becoming free from egotism and the sense of mineness for the body and the world, regarding solely the supremely Beloved Lord alone as the supreme refuge, supreme goal and supreme friend, one should remain immersed in supreme bliss by dwelling

* तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥
योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्भक्तेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥

(६ । ४६-४७)

** तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मा मेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥

(गीता ८ । ७)

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING DEVOTION 67 AND EXAMPLES

uninterruptedly like the flow of oil upon the Names, attributes, glory and Form with an exclusive sentiment, extreme faith and love; and in this way remaining devoted to meditation alone one should perform all the bodily, oral and mental activities only for that supremely Beloved Lord, according to His liking and desire, for His pleasure alone, being impelled by a firm and supreme self-interest to make Him happy and in an altogether disinterested manner. If for some reason, there is a lapse in thinking about and remembering Him even for a moment, one should then feel infinitely more agonized than even a fish taken out of water — this indeed is the highest form of devotion.

Such a completely surrendered loving devotee does not want to give up the remembrance of his Beloved Lord in any circumstances whatsoever even for the sake of liberation involving no re-birth, not to speak of the happiness resulting from ruling over the three worlds. While praising such a devotee, says the Lord to devotee Uddhava —

"Neither Brahmā (My own son) nor Lord Śiva (who is My own Self) nor again Lord Balarāma, (My own elder brother) nor Goddess Śrī (My better half) nor My own (divine) personality is so very dear to Me as (a devotee like) you."

" I ever dog the footsteps of him who is free from (all) expectation, is given to contemplation (on Me), composed, free from animosity and sees unity everywhere, in order that I may be cleansed (absolved from the stigma of not being able to repay My debt to him) by the dust of his feet (that is sure to fall on My person in that case). "

" Others cannot realize My all-blissful character which is apprehended by those exalted souls who have nothing to call their own, whose mind is devoted to Me, who have subdued their passions and are fond of all living beings and whose understanding is unclouded by desires; (for) this character of Mine can be known only by those who are free from wants. " * (Bha. XI.xiv.15-17)

* न तथा मे प्रियतम आत्मयोनिर्न शङ्करः ।
 न च सङ्कर्षणो न श्रीनैवात्मा च यथा भवान् ॥
 निरपेक्षं मुनिं शान्तं निर्वैरं समदर्शनम् ।
 अनुव्रजाम्यहं नित्यं पूयेत्यङ्घ्रिरेणुभिः ॥
 निष्किञ्चना मय्यनुरक्तचेतसः
 शान्ता महान्तोऽखिलजीववत्सलाः ।
 कामैरनालब्धधियो जुषन्ति यत्
 तन्नैरपेक्ष्यं न विदुः सुखं मम ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० ११ । १४ । १५—१७)

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING DEVOTION 69 AND EXAMPLES

Thus, according to Śrī Nāradaḥ, this alone constitutes devotion. Dedicating all his activities to the Lord, such a devotee remains engaged uninterruptedly in the remembrance of the Lord and feels supremely agonized even at the slightest lapse anywhere.

अस्त्येवमेवम् ॥ २० ॥

20. IT IS EXACTLY SO.

In order to strengthen the established principle mentioned in the last aphorism Devarṣi Nārada says that in reality this is the very nature of devotion.

यथा ब्रजगोपिकानाम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. JUST LIKE THAT (DEVOTION) OF THE GOPIS OF VRAJA —

Having described the characteristics of devotion the Devarṣi now cites as an example the blessed Gopīs of revered memory and crest-jewel among the loving devotees. Really speaking, such indeed is the glory of Gopīs. Who is there on earth who can describe the essence of Gopīs' Love? Their body, mind, wealth, Loka (worldly usages), Parloka (the other world) — all these stood dedicated to Śrī

Kṛṣṇa. They used to dwell upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone day and night, chant the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone constantly in a voice choked with emotion and see Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone everywhere and always. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself has told them --

" (As a matter of fact) I cannot even through the (long) life of a heavenly being (36000 human years) repay My obligation (which is the duty of all virtuous men) to you, whose connection with Me is (absolutely) free from blemish and who have fixed your mind on Me completely cutting asunder the fetters that bound you to your home and which cannot be easily broken. (Therefore) let your services to Me be repaid by your own goodness." * (Bha. X.xxxii.22)

While sending Uddhava with His message (to the Gopīs) Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke to him in a voice choked with emotion and with tears of love trickling down His cheeks :-

*

न पारयेऽहं निर्वद्यसंयुजां
स्वसाधुकृत्यं विबुधायुषापि वः ।
या माभजन् दुर्जरगेहशृङ्खलाः
संवृश्च्य तद्वः प्रतियातु साधुना ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० १० । ३२ । २२)

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING DEVOTION 71 AND EXAMPLES

" The latter have not only given their mind to Me but their (very) life is centred in Me; (nay) they have renounced for My sake everything connected with their body and have mentally taken refuge in Me alone, their beloved friend, the highest object of their affection, their very Self. I stand (through thick and thin) by those that have not only given up their interests in this as in the other world but have also set at naught their moral obligations for My sake. I — the most beloved of (all) their beloved objects — being at a distance from them, the women of Vraja, O dear Uddhava, remain forgetful of everything (including their own self), thinking (constantly as they do) of Me, and overwhelmed with intense longing occasioned by separation (from Me). With their mind absorbed in Me the cowherd women are in most cases somehow propping up their life with great difficulty on My assurances of coming back (to Vraja). " *

(Bha. X.xlvi. 4-6)

* ता मन्मनस्का मत्प्राणा मदर्थे त्यक्तदैहिकाः ।
ये त्यक्तलोकधर्माश्च मदर्थे तान् बिभर्म्यहम् ॥
मयि ताः प्रेयसां प्रेष्ठे दूरस्थे गोकुलस्त्रियः ।
स्मरन्त्योऽङ्ग विमुह्यन्ति विरहौत्कण्ठयविह्वलाः ॥
धारयन्त्यतिकृच्छ्रेण प्रायः प्राणान् कथञ्चन ।
प्रत्यागमनसन्देशैर्वलुब्धो मे मदात्मिकाः ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० १० । ४६ । ४-६)

After reaching Vraja when Uddhava saw the condition of these love-intoxicated Gopīs with his own eyes, when he found that they saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa all around them both inside and outside and when he heard from their lips —

1. * 'There is no room left in our hearts, how shall we accommodate any one else in our heart when the Darling of Nanda (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) is already ensconced there? While we are moving about or looking around, whether we are awake during the day or dreaming asleep at night, the Swarthy Form leaves not the heart even for a single moment. O Uddhava, you have told us so many things and drawn our attention towards the sense of public decorum, but what are we to do, when the body is full to the brim with love — the body in the form of a jar being

नाहिन रह्यो हियमहँ ठौर ।

*

नंदनंदन अछत कैसे आनिये उर और ॥

चलत चितवत दिवस जागत, सुपन सोवत रात ।

हृदयते वह स्याम मूरति छिन न इत उत जात ॥

कहत कथा अनेक उधौ ! लोक-लाज दिखात ।

कहा करौं तन प्रेमपूरन, घट न सिंधु समात ॥

स्याम गात सरोज आनन, छलित गति मृदुहास ।

‘सूर’ ऐसे रूप कारन मरत लोचन प्यास ॥

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING DEVOTION 73 AND EXAMPLES

already brim-full with love cannot contain a drop more even though submerged in the ocean. Blue in Body, face like a lotus, graceful gait and a sweet smile — Says Surdas 'to drink the nectar of this Beauty the eyes are dying athirst. '

2. * 'O Uddhava, we are not fit to practise yoga, being women, what do we know of the essence of wisdom, how shall we practise meditation? You ask us to close these eyes - the eyes wherein abides the Form of Hari, such deceitful talk is unbearable to our ears, O black bee in the form of Uddhava. You (indirectly) ask us to get our ears cleft and twist our locks
-

* ऊधौ ! जोग जोग हम नहीं ।

अबल्ला ग्यानसार कहा जानै, कैसे ध्यान धराहीं ॥
ते ये मूँदन नैन कहत हौ, हरि मूरति जिन माहीं ।
ऐसी कथा कपटकी मधुकर हमते सुनी न जाहीं ॥
खवन चीर अरु जटा बँधावहु, ये दुख कौन समाहीं ।
चंदन तजि अँग भसम बतावत, विरह अनल अति दाहीं ॥
जोगी भरमत जेहि लगि भूले सो तो है हम पाहीं ॥
'सूरदास' सो न्यारो न पल छिन ज्यों घटते परिछाहीं ॥

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into matted hair, who will suffer all this pain? You advise us to give up the use of sandal paste and besmear our bodies with ashes, but do'nt you know we are burning with the fire of separation? He, in whose quest the yogis having lost their way are wandering about, indeed abides with us. Separate from us He is not even for a moment, just as a shadow from the substance, Says Surdas.'

The Gopīs said, "O Uddhava, go and initiate into yoga those who are not in union with the Lord. Here you see, there is eternal union. Our beloved Śyāma eternally abides with us."

Then were Uddhava's eyes opened and he was carried away by the sweeping current of the unalloyed love of the Gopīs. (A saint has described his condition thus) —

"Hearing the words of the Gopīs, Uddhava lost his adherence to Jñāna; singing the praises of Gopāla (the Divine cowherd Kṛṣṇa) and elated with joy he began to roam about in the bowers. Intoxicated with love, Uddhava now prostrates himself at the feet of the Gopīs and then he runs about and embraces the trees — blessed is such

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING DEVOTION 75 AND EXAMPLES

love (of the Gopis). " *

With a heart bent low with devotion he said —

" These cowherd women alone on earth have justified their possessing a human body in that they have developed supreme love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the Protector of Cows), the Soul of the universe, — (a love) which not only strivers afraid of metempsychosis but sages (emancipated souls), nay, (even) we (devotees of the Lord) aspire for? What (else) is there to be gained through (three kinds of) ** births as a Brahman by him who has developed a taste for the stories

* सुनि गोपीके बैन नेम ऊधौके भूले ।
गावत गुन गोपाल फिरत कुंजनमें फूले ॥
खिन गोपिनके पग परै, धन्य सोइ है नेम ।
धाइ धाइ द्रुम भेंट हीं, ऊधौ छाके प्रेम ॥

** The three kinds of birth as a Brahman are .- (1) physical birth from Brahman parents, (2) investiture with the sacred thread and initiation in the holy Gāyatrī-Mantra which is regarded as a second birth; and (3) consecration befitting one for the performance of a sacrifice, which is looked upon as a third incarnation.

of Sṛī Kṛṣṇa (the deathless Lord) ? (Or what is to be gained through repeated births as Brahmā by him who has not been able to develop a zest for such stories ?" *
(Bha. X.xlvii.58) §

" Oh, the grace which descended on the cowherdresses of Vraja, — who attained the object of their desire in the form of having their necks encircled by His stout arms during the Rāsa festival, - did not fall to the lot of celestial damsels (nymphs) possessing the fragrance and splendour of a lotus, or (even), of 'Sṛī' who is exclusively attached to His person (bosom);

§ एताः परं तनुभृतो भुवि गोपवध्वो
गोविन्द एव निखिलात्मनि रूढभावाः ।
वाञ्छन्ति यद्भवभियो मुनयो वयं च
किं ब्रह्मजन्मभिरनन्तकथारसस्य ॥
(श्रीमद्भा० १०.४७.५८)

* The compound word 'अनन्तकथारसस्य' can be split up in two ways - firstly as अनन्त + कथा + रसस्य and secondly as अनन्त + कथा + अरसस्य. The word 'Brahma' too admits of a double meaning. The alternative interpretation of the last quarter of the verse according to the latter way of splitting the compound has been shown within brackets.

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how (then) could others expect such favour
(from Him) ? " (§) (Bha. X.xlvii.60)

" Oh, let me be (incarnated as) any one of
the shrubs, creepers or herbs in (the
woodlands of) Vṛndāvana catching the dust
of feet of these (blessed ladies), who
(successfully) trod the path (of Devotion)
leading to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, — (the path) which
is (still) to be strenuously sought for (even)
by the Upaniṣads (§§) neglecting their own
people as well as the path trodden by the
virtuous, (both of) which are (so) difficult
to abandon (for a chaste woman). " (§§§)
(Bha. X.xlvii.61)

(§) नायं श्रियोऽङ्ग उ नितान्तरतेः प्रसादः

स्वयोषितां नलिनगन्धरुचां कुतोऽन्याः ।
रासोत्सवेऽस्य भुजदण्डगृहीतकण्ठ-
लब्धाशिषां य उदगाद् ब्रजवल्लवीनाम् ॥
(श्रीमद्भा० १०.४७.६०)

(§§) This evidently refers to the Upanisadic text
'यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते ऋषाप्य मनसा सहः' which
tells us that "words (scriptural texts) fail
to reach Brahma and return (unsuccessful)
along with the mind."

(§§§) आसामहो चरणरेणुजुषामहं स्यां
वृन्दावने किमपि गुल्मलतौषधीनाम् ।
या दुस्त्यजं स्वजनमार्यपथं च हित्वा
भेजुर्मुकुन्दपदवीं ध्रुतिभिर्विमृग्याम् ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० १०.४७.६१)

The high-born women of Mathura have depicted the condition of the Gopīs declaring their lives blessed —

" Blessed are, the women of Vraja, who celebrate Him in song while milking their cows, pounding the corn, churning their curds, plastering their floor (with cowdung etc.) rocking the cradles, lulling their crying babes, sprinkling and sweeping their houses and attending to other such duties with a mind full of love and their throat choked with tears, (nay, all) whose movements are inspired by the thought of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (who is no other than Lord Viṣṇu, who took wide strides while measuring the three worlds during His descent as the divine Dwarf). " * (Bha. X.xliv.15)

The more we sing the praises of these Gopīs, the more will they fall short. Devotees of Vraja who had renounced their all have ever

* या दोहनेऽवहनने मथनोपलेप-
 प्रेङ्खेह्वनार्भरुदितोक्षणमार्जनादौ ।
 गायन्ति चैनमनुरक्तधियोऽश्रुकण्ठ्यो
 धन्या व्रजस्त्रिय उरुक्रमचित्तयानाः ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० १० । ४४ । १५)

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longed to be transformed into the dust of the lotus feet of the Gopīs. Truly has it been said —

" The Gopīs stand at the very zenith of love - they who brought Śrī Kṛṣṇa under control by (forcibly) clasping His arms to their bosom." *

Achieved souls, renowned for their extreme renunciation like Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanyandeva have indeed recognized the Gopīs as their guide on the path of love. The celebrated devotee Nagridas (who was one day the ruler of Kishangarh State) says —

Praise be to Lalita etc. and (the incarnated) vedic hymns damsels of Vraja - who are ever anxious to revel in pastimes dear to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, maddened with Bliss of the Divine Couple, full of eternal joy, abode of Beauty, they cling to Him like a shadow through all the delightful hours. Their countenance fair like the moon-rays - sweet music flowing from their mouth - produces waves of bliss in the heart of their Lord. Says Nagari (Nagaridas - the poet-saint) that they are a mine of all

* गोपी प्रेमकी धुजा ।

जिन घनस्याम किये बस अपने उरधरि स्यामभुजा ॥

rendezvous and in recounting their virtues his intellect gets crippled.' *

Another devotee who hailed from Vraja sings -

** 'Submerged in Divine Love, these Gopīs are altogether different from all other women - unique they are, they are dear as life to the lotus-eyed Govinda Chanda (Sri

* जयति ललितादि देवीय व्रज श्रुतिरिचा,
 कृष्ण प्रिय केलि आधीर अंगी ।
 जुगल-रस-मत्त आनंदमय रूपनिधि,
 सकल सुख समयकी छाँह संगी ॥
 गौरमुख हिमकरनकी जु किरनावली,
 स्रवत मधु गान हिय पिय तरंगी ।
 'नागरी' सकल संकेत आकारिनी,
 गनत गुनगननि मति होति पंगी ॥

** ये हरिरस ओपी गोपी सब तियतें न्यारी ।
 कमलनयन गोविंदचंदकी प्रानपियारी ॥
 निरमत्सर जे संत तिनहिं चूड़ामनि गोपी ।
 निरमल प्रेम प्रबाह सकल मरजादा लोपी ॥
 जे ऐसे मरजाद मेटि मोहन गुन गावें ।
 क्यों नहिं परमानन्द प्रेमभगती सुख पावें ॥

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Kṛṣṇa). The Gopīs are crest-jewels among the saints who are free from envy, the strong current of their spotless love washes away all sense of decorum. Why should those persons, who sing the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa casting away such decorum, not attain Supreme Bliss and the joy of loving devotion ?

The glory of the Gopīs can be comprehended to a certain extent only when the practicant has made some progress on the path of love having developed extreme dispassion towards all sense-objects.

तत्रापि न माहात्म्यज्ञानविस्मृत्यपवादः ॥२२॥

22. IN THIS STATE TOO THERE IS NO FORGETFULNESS (IN THE GOPĪS) OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA'S GLORY EVEN AS AN EXCEPTION.

It means that the Gopīs were aware of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glory, mystery and attributes. Some people are of the opinion that in the realm of love, the sense of glory does not exist; they hold that love cannot subsist where there is a sense of glory, but such was not the case with the Gopīs. Being conscious of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as God Himself, the supreme Puruṣa, the Gopīs regarded Him as their most beloved lord. This is the main difference between Divine Love and

temporal love. This is what really happens in Divine Love. Those men who say that the Gopīs did not regard Śrī Kṛṣṇa as God, should read and ponder over the following verses of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatā* —

* The Gopīs said: You ought not to speak so cruelly to us. Kindly take in Your service us, that have sought the soles of Your feet renouncing all (other) objects, (even) as Lord Nārāyaṇa (the most ancient person) accepts the (worship of) those that seek Liberation. (Pray) do not abandon us, O Lord who are (so) hard to win over: As it has been observed by You, the Knower of Dharma (the principles of righteousness), that the natural duty of women is to render

* मैवं विभोऽर्हति भवान् गदितुं नृशंसं
 संत्यज्य सर्वविषयांस्तव पादमूलम् ।
 भक्ता भजस्व दुरवग्रह मा त्यजास्मान्
 देवो यथाऽऽदिपुरुषो भजते मुमुक्षून् ॥
 यत्पत्यपत्यसुहृदामनुवृत्तिरङ्ग
 स्त्रीणां स्वधर्म इति धर्मविदा त्वयोक्तम् ।
 अस्त्वेवमेतदुपदेशपदे त्वयीशे
 प्रेष्ठो भवांस्तनुभृतां किल बन्धुरात्मा ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० १०.२६.३१, ३२)

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING DEVOTION 33 AND EXAMPLES

service to their husband and children as well as to the relations of their husband, O beloved one let such service be done to You the Almighty Lord the (central) theme of all teachings; for You are the most beloved Friend, (nay) the (very) Self of all emotioned souls (so that service rendered to You will redound to the gratification of all, even as by watering the roots of a tree all its limbs get nourished of their own accord)." (Bha. X.xxix.31, 32)

" * From the time, O lotus-eyed One, we touched at some unknown spot (in the forest) the soles of Your (lotus) feet —

* यर्ह्यम्बुजाक्ष तव पादतलं रमाया
दत्तक्षणं कचिदरण्यजनप्रियस्य ।
अस्प्राक्षम तत्प्रभृति नान्यसमक्षमङ्ग
स्थातुं त्वयाभिरमिता बत पारयामः ॥
श्रीर्यत्पदास्बुजरजश्चकमे तुलस्या
लब्ध्वापि वक्षसि पदं किल भृत्यजुष्टम् ।
यस्याः स्ववीक्षणकृतेऽन्यसुरप्रयास-
स्तद्वद् वयं च तव पादरजः प्रपन्नाः ॥
(श्रीमद्भा० १०.२६.३६, ३७)

that concede the privilege of touching them (even) to Goddess Ramā (only) now and then, — alas ! we are not able (even) to stand before anyone else, now that we have been blessed by You, to whom we (the denizens of the forest) are so dear, O Darling ! Having secured a place even on Your bosom, Śrī (the goddess of beauty and prosperity) has (always) sought in rivalry with Tulasi (the deity presiding over the basil plant, the favourite of the Lord) for the dust of Your lotus feet, actually enjoyed by Your servants, - Śrī, for (drawing) whose (gracious) look (on them) the other gods (strenuously) exert themselves. We too have likewise sought the dust of Your feet. (Bha. X.xxix.36, 37)

" * Indeed You have been particularly born as the Dispeller of the fears and distress of Vraja, (even) as Lord Viṣṇu (the most ancient Person) was born (in heaven in the form of the divine Dwarf) as the Protector of the celestial realm. (Bha. X.xxix.41)

* व्यक्तं भवान् ब्रजभयार्तिहरोऽभिजातो
देवो यथाऽऽदिपुरुषः सुरलोकगोप्ता ॥
(श्रीमद्भा० १०.२६.४१)

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" * Surely You are no (mere) son of a cowherd woman (Yasodā), being the witness of the internal sense (viz. the mind) of all embodied souls. Solicited by Brahmā, You appeared, O Friend in the race of the Yadus for the protection of the universe. "
(Bha. X.xxxi. 4)

On the authority of such innumerable testimonies and grounds it is absolutely proved that the Gopīs had surrendered themselves to Śrī Kṛṣṇa knowing Him as God Himself, the embodiment of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss.

तद्विहीनं जाराणामिव ॥ २३ ॥

23. THAT (LOVE) - THE LOVE BEREFT OF THE KNOWLEDGE THAT GOD IS GOD - IS OF THE SAME CATEGORY AS THE LOVE FOR PARAMOUR.

* न खलु गोपिकानन्दनो भया-

नखिलदेहिनामन्तरात्मदक् ।

विखनसार्थितो विश्वगुप्तये

सख उदेयिवान् सात्वतां कुले ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० १०.३१.४)

Without the knowledge of glory, love of women directed towards a man (other than the husband) is like the love for a paramour. That love, in which exists complete surrender and which is not tainted by the least odour of worldly interest, can manifest itself towards God alone. Even though love borne towards God in any way - knowingly or unknowingly - does not become fruitless, yet there is a peculiarity in the love directed (towards Him) knowingly. What an infinite joy we derive from the mere thought that God is our Beloved Lord, how great and indescribable then would be the joy of those who may actually happen to attain God in the form of their Supreme Beloved. The Gopīs had the proud privilege of enjoying this supremely pure and Divine Bliss. This was why the great sage Śukadeva, a liberated soul, related this sacred story of Divine Love to emperor Parīkṣit, who was awaiting his death. This love (of the Gopīs), therefore, accompanied as it was with the knowledge of Divine glory, was the purest in character.

नारत्येव तस्मिन्स्तत्सुखसुखित्वम् ॥ २४ ॥

24. IN THAT LOVE (THE LOVE TOWARDS A PARAMOUR) THE SENTIMENT OF FEELING EXULTANT IN THE EXULTATION OF THE BELOVED DOES NOT EXIST.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING DEVOTION 87 AND EXAMPLES

Adulterous persons, being pressed by passion, love (their paramour) for their own pleasure alone, nay, for the gratification of their own senses, they experience no joy in the joy of their beloved. Such a sentiment did not exist in the love of the Gopīs. In worldly love, born of lust, the beloved man is the paramour and there is a desire for physical contact with him. In the case of the Gopīs, however, the Beloved was God Himself, the Soul of the Universe and there was no desire for physical contact lurking anywhere in their hearts. The Gopīs merely longed for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Whatever they possessed - their body, mind, intellect, physical charm, youth, wealth and life in itself stood offered to their Beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa as accessories for His worship. They longed to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa happy by offering their all to Him. That alone which brought happiness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa - they felt it to be their dharma. They experienced supreme joy in that alone. Besides, they did not conceive of anything else whatsoever, far from having a desire in their mind for happiness springing from another source. Herein lies the difference between Love and sensuality. Sensuality seeks self-gratification through others whereas Love longs to make the Beloved happy through itself and (thus) to rejoice in seeing indeed the beloved happy. While describing the Love of the Gopīs, the author of the *Chaitanya-*

Charitāmṛta says quite rightly —

" The desire for gratification of one's own senses is called Kāma (sensuality), whereas the desire for delighting the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is known by the name of Prema (Love). The object of Kāma is simply self-gratification while sublime Prema has the happiness of Kṛṣṇa for its object. The Gopī cares not for her own happiness or otherwise; the happiness of Kṛṣṇa is the motive of all her activities. Actions pertaining to worldly duties, scriptural injunctions, physical functions, sense of modesty, forbearance, comfort of body and even the vital object like the highest bliss -- renouncing all these, she worships Kṛṣṇa. Even this betaking of hers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Love is for His happiness alone (and not for her own). This is called firm affection for Kṛṣṇa. It is as spotless as a pure white and washed piece of cloth. Thus there is a world of difference between Kāma and Prema. Kāma is pitch darkness and Prema is the radiant sun. There is not the slightest odour of sensuality, therefore, in the Gopīs. The happiness of Kṛṣṇa is the only motive of their relation

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with Him." *

Dedication of all their possessions to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the feeling of extreme restlessness in forgetting Śrī Kṛṣṇa even for a moment, perfect knowledge about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's majesty and glory and feeling exultant in the happiness of Śrī

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आत्मेन्द्रिय प्रीति-इच्छा, तार नाम काम ।
कृष्णेन्द्रिय प्रीति-इच्छा धरे प्रेम नाम ॥
कामेर तात्पर्य निज संभोग केवल ।
कृष्ण-सुख तात्पर्य प्रेम तो प्रबल ॥
आत्म-सुख-दुःख गोपी ना करे विचार ।
कृष्ण-सुख-हेतु करे सब व्यवहार ॥
लोकधर्म, वेदधर्म, देहधर्म कर्म ।
लज्जा, धैर्य देहसुख, आत्मसुख मर्म ॥
सर्व त्याग करये करे कृष्णेर भजन ।
कृष्णसुख हेतु करे प्रेमेर सेवन ॥
इहाके कहिये कृष्णे दृढ़ अनुराग ।
स्वच्छ धौत वस्त्र जैछे नाहि कोन दाग ॥
अतएव काम प्रेमे बहुत अंतर ।
काम अंधतम प्रेम निर्मल भास्कर ॥
अतएव गोपीगणे नाहि कामगंध ।
कृष्णसुख हेतु मात्र कृष्णेर संबंध ॥

(चैतन्य चरितामृत, आदि लीला,

४. १४१-१४३, १४५-१४६)

Kṛṣṇa alone - these are the four dominating characteristics in the Love of the Gopīs.

The Love of the Gopīs is supremely sacred and transcendental. May Śrī Kṛṣṇa take pity on those who smell sin or adultery in it.

§§§

LOVING DEVOTION IS AN END IN ITSELF. 91

सा तु कर्मज्ञानयोगेभ्योऽप्यधिकतरा ॥२५॥

25. THAT (DIVINE LOVE) IS SUPERIOR EVEN TO KARMA (ACTION), JÑĀNA (KNOWLEDGE) AND YOGA.

Karma, Jñāna and Yoga - all these three are conducive to God-realization; but Bhakti (devotion) is superior to all three of them. In the former, caste, order (of religious life) and religious qualifications of the practicant have to be borne in mind, besides there is the risk of a fall, whereas in true devotion there is no risk at all, as the aspirant receives full support from God. Moreover, the path of devotion is open to all - men, women, Brahmans, Sūdras etc. Says Goswami Tulasidas —

" They who knowingly cast aside such Devotion and take pains to acquire mere wisdom are fools who would leave alone the cow of plenty at their own house and knock about in search of the Āka plant (*Calotropis gigantia*) to get milk out of it. Listen, O lord of the winged creatures: the fools who ignore Bhakti and seek happiness by any other means stupidly seek to swim

across the ocean without the help of a vessel." * (Ra. ca. ma. VII. 114. 1-4)

" Uma, (continues Lord Śiva) practice of Yoga (concentration of mind), Japa (muttering of prayers), charity and penance, performance of sacrifices, fasting and other religious observances fail to evoke Śrī Rāma's compassion to the same degree as unalloyed devotion does." ** (Ra. ca. ma. VI. 117)

" Listen, O Pannagāri (enemy of serpents i.e. Garura) there is no other Bhajana like the cultivation of Love. Taking this into account, the sages repeatedly chaht, the

* जे असि भगति जानि परिहरहीं । केवल ग्यान हेतु भ्रम करहीं ॥
ते जड़ कामधेनु गृहँ त्यागी । खोजत आकु फिरहि पय लागी ॥
सुनु खगेस हरि भगति बिहाई । जे सुख चाहिँ आन उपाई ॥
ते सठ महासिंधु बिनु तरनी । पैरि पार चाहिँ जड़ करनी ॥
(रा.च.मा. ७.११४/१-४)

** उमा जोग जप दान तप नाना व्रत मख नेम ।
राम कृपा नहिँ करहिँ तस जस निस्केवल प्रेम ॥
(रा.च.मा. ६/११७)

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glories of Rāma." * (Ra. ca. ma. VII.95)

The Lord Himself declares —

" Neither Yoga nor Śāṅkhya nor righteousness nor study of the Vedas (or Japa of the Divine Name), austerity or renunciation captivates Me (so thoroughly) as does intense Devotion. I, the beloved Self of the righteous, can be captured (only) through exclusive Devotion coupled with reverence. Devotion concentrated on Me absolves even the pariahs (who cook and eat the flesh of dogs) from the stigma attaching to their birth." ** (Bha. XI. xiv. 20, 21)

* पन्नगारि पुनु प्रेम सम भजन न दूसर आन ।

यह विचारि मुनि पुनि-पुनि करत राम-गुन-गान ॥
(रा.च.मा. ७/६५)

** न साधयति मां योगो न सांख्यं धर्म उद्धव ।
न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्त्यागो यथा भक्तिर्ममोर्जिता ॥
भक्त्याहमेकया ग्राह्यः श्रद्धयाऽऽत्मा प्रियः सताम् ।
भक्तिः पुनाति मन्निष्ठा श्वपाकानपि सम्भवात् ॥
(भा० ११.१४.२०, २१)

In a similar vein, the Lord says in the *Gītā* too —

" Neither by study of the Vedas nor by penance, nor again by charity, nor even by ritual can I be seen in this form (with four arms) as you have seen Me. Through single-minded devotion, however, I can be seen in this form (with four arms), nay, known in essence and even entered into, O valiant Arjuna." * (*Gītā*, XI. 53, 54)

फलरूपत्वात् ॥२६॥

26. FOR THAT (DEVOTION) IS AN END IN ITSELF.

In reality this type of devotion (described above) is an end in itself and not a means to an end. That devotion which is recognized as a means to the attainment of knowledge, is a secondary form of devotion; it falls under the category of ordinary worship; it is not loving devotion. Loving devotion indeed is the culmination of all disciplines.

(Says Goswami Tulasidas —)

" Pilgrimages to sacred places and other means of self-purification, perfection in Yoga (mind control), dispassion and wisdom;

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sacred rites and religious practices, vows and charitable acts of various kinds, self-denial and self-control, Japa (muttering of prayers) and austere penance, performing manifold sacrifices, compassion to all living beings, ministering to the Brahmans and one's Preceptor, learning, modesty, right judgement and nobility of mind and character, in short, all the expedients extolled in the Vedas, Bhavānī, have but one reward - Devotion to Śrī Hari. " * (Ra. ca. ma. VII. 125. 4-7)

ईश्वरस्याप्यभिमानद्वेषित्वाद् दैन्यप्रियत्वाच्च ॥ २७ ॥

27. GOD TOO HAS A DISLIKE FOR PRIDE AND HUMILITY IS DEAR TO HIM.

Practicants treading the path of Karma, Jñāna and Yoga may get proud of their own power and their spiritual discipline; while the

* तीर्थाटन साधन समुदाई । जोग बिराग ग्यान निपुनाई ॥
 नाना कर्म धर्म व्रत दाना । संजम दम जप तप मख नाना ॥
 भूत दया द्विज गुर सेवकाई । बिद्या विनय विवेक बड़ाई ॥
 जहँ लगी साधन वेद बखानी । सत्र कर फल हरि भगति भवानी ॥

(RT. च. मा. ७. १२५/४-७)

very name of God is ' दर्पहारी ' (the humbler of pride). Though in reality, God has neither attraction nor aversion for any one whomsoever, to Him all are equal. He liberates all. Of course, the methods of liberation are different in different cases. The egotist He delivers through chastisement, whereas the meek devotee by embracing him affectionately. This is why the wrath of God too has been declared as a boon. Towards the egotist - He plays the role like that of an enemy and towards the meek like that of a loving friend. This is why He is called by such names as 'Friend of the humble', 'Shelter of the shelterless'. 'Wealth of the poor', and so on. In fact, however, His heart is full of love even for the egotist; indeed for this reason it is that He humbles his pride.

(Says Goswami Tulasidas --)

" * Hear of Śrī Rāma's innate disposition: He never tolerates pride in His people. For pride is the root of metempsychosis and the cause of all kinds of pain and every form

* सुनहु राम कर सहज सुभाऊ । जन अभिमान न राखहिं काऊ ॥
 संसृति मूल सूलप्रद नाना । सकल सोक दायक अभिमाना ॥
 ताते करहिं कृपानिधि दूरी । सेवक पर ममता अति भूरी ॥

(रा.च.मा. ७.७३/५-७)

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of grief. Hence the All-merciful gets rid of it in His extreme fondness for His servants." (Ra. ca. ma. VII. 73/5-7)

Notwithstanding all this, one does indeed see repugnance in chastisement, but a meek, an humble and a destitute devotee, He clasps to His bosom. He feels not the slightest hitch in rendering the meanest service to him; on the other hand the devotees naturally deem themselves to be humble servants (of God). Pray they --

" O Lord Kṛṣṇa, lacking in all Sādhana, subservient to *maya*. altogether, burdened with sin and miserable as I am, you alone are my refuge." *

" Where shall I go leaving Thy lotus feet ? Who else is known in this world as the redeemer of the fallen ? To whom else the humble are so extremely dear ? " **
(*Vinaya-patrikā* 101)

* सर्वसाधनहीनस्य पराधीनस्य सर्वथा ।
पापपीनस्य दीनस्य कृष्ण एव गतिर्मम ॥

** जाऊँ कहाँ तजि चरन तुम्हारे ।
काको नाम पतितपावन जग, केहि अति दीन पियारे ॥
(विनयपत्रिका १०१)

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

This humility is not that state of privation in which a man suffering from want of money, honour and worldly glory, etc. pants for obtaining them. This humility indeed is that absence of pride and egotism which even the most magnificent of emperors can possess (only) through the grace of God. This humility implies the total annihilation of pride and the feeling of doership; it is but the recognition of the fact that there are no such things as 'I' and 'Mine', whatever exists is God and God alone and everything belongs as well to Him; all that happens, happens through His might and inspiration. He alone is both the doer and the Prime Mover.

But this true humility so dear to God is not easy of attainment. Without the complete banishment of the phantom of pride, humility is not easily attained. Pride of Varna (order of society), race, wealth, honour, learning, resources, health etc. and the vanity of doership do not allow this humility to sprout in man; under the guise of hypocrisy one poses oneself as humble outwardly, one calls oneself humble before God and assumes the role of weeping, but one's humility is put to the test then and there only when one maintains it in its natural form even on the acquisition of the greatest of material possessions and resources. Not only does one tolerate being publicly condemned as a sinner and wretch by others lower in rank than

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oneself, but also likes such condemnation as true and feels delighted to hear it and who is always pining for the realization of God, it is such contrite - such humble souls that are loved by God. In true devotion there can be no room at all for the pride of one's own efforts or spiritual discipline, this is why the path of Devotion is the best one.

तस्या ज्ञानमेव साधनमित्येके ॥ २८ ॥

28. SOME (ĀCHĀRYAS) ARE OF OPINION THAT JÑĀNA (KNOWLEDGE) IS THE ONLY MEANS TO ATTAIN THAT (DEVOTION).

Although in the case of devotion, this knowledge is indeed supremely necessary that the object of my devotion is that Lord alone who is the Master of all, the Support of all, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Creator, the Sustainer and Destroyer of the Universe, the Lord of *maya*, the Unborn, the Imperishable, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the Soul of the Universe, Attributeless, Changeless, Formless, Possessor of attributes and a Form and that there is nothing at all superior to Him. Because even if there is not this much knowledge, there will be no faith and without faith there will be no affection and without affection Bhakti will not get established on a firm footing.

(Says Goswami Tulasidas —)

" Without knowledge faith is out of the question; and without faith there can be no love. Shorn of love, devotion will not abide any more than the lubricity produced by water, O King of the birds." *

(Ra. ca. ma. VII. 88. 7, 8)

Yet herein it is not necessary to pursue the path of non-dualism (Adwaita). Devotion to God is attained simply through faith and affection alone. Jatāyu, (the king of vultures), Gajendra (the lord of elephants), Dhruva, Sabarī etc. realized God through simply such devotion to Him alone.

अन्योन्याश्रयत्वमित्यन्ये ॥ २६ ॥

29. OTHER ĀCHĀRYAS ARE OF THE OPINION THAT BHAKTI (DEVOTION) AND JÑĀNA (KNOWLEDGE) ARE MUTUALLY DEPENDENT ON ONE ANOTHER.

Such is also the case. Through the secondary type of devotion, the truth about God

*

जानें बिनु न होइ परतीती ।

बिनु परतीति होइ नहिं प्रीती ॥

प्रीति बिना नहिं भगति दिदाई ।

जिमि खगपति जल कै चिकनाई ॥

(रा.च.मा. ७.८८/७, ८)

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is realized and a realization of this truth produces excessive love for the Lord. But the lovers of devotion alone attach no importance to this view. For they know that when spotless loving devotion manifests itself in its entirety then knowledge of anybody else does not exist at all separately. Both the lover and the Beloved become one. Who will then know whom ?

स्वयं फलरूपतेति ब्रह्मकुमाराः* ॥ ३० ॥

30. ACCORDING TO THE SONS OF BRAHMĀ (SANATKUMAR, HIS BROTHERS AND NĀRADA) BHAKTI IS AN END IN ITSELF.

Therefore, this type of devotion alone is the means and the same alone is the end. The root too it is and so also the fruit. Devotees practise devotion for its own sake because it is an end in itself. It is neither attained through any means nor is there anything better than that in the attainment of which it may serve as a means.

(Says Goswami Tulasidas —)

" It stands by itself and requires no other prop; whereas Jñāna (knowledge of God in

* Some read it as ब्रह्मकुमारः

His absolute formless aspect) and Vijñāna (knowledge of the qualified aspect of God, both with and without form) depend on it." * (Ra. ca. ma. III.15.3)

राजगृहभोजनादिषु तथैव दृष्टत्वात् ॥ ३१ ॥

31. SUCH A THING IS OBSERVED IN ROYAL PALACES AND MEALS ETC.

These examples have been taken to show how the afore-mentioned devotion is an end in itself.

न तेन राजपरितोषः क्षुधाशान्तिर्वा ॥ ३२ ॥

32. THAT (THE MERE KNOWLEDGE) WILL NEITHER PLEASE THE KING NOR WILL IT SATISFY HUNGER.

Simply hearing and knowing the description of a royal palace will not serve the purpose. The king is pious, powerful, a well-wisher of his subjects and possesses a handsome appearance and virtues - even if we come to

*

सो स्वतंत्र अवलंब न आना ।

तेहि आधीन ग्यान बिग्याना ॥

(रा.च.मा. ३.१५.३)

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know all this, how does it matter ? Surely the king does not get pleased with this knowledge alone. Similarly, if we know that *Halvā* (a kind of sweet preparation) is sweet, is prepared from sugar and ghee and is very delicious, this does not indeed satisfy our hunger. Likewise, the mere verbal knowledge neither pleases God nor does it bring us peace. Although all are equal in the eyes of the Lord, yet His pleasure is attained through devotion alone. He Himself says —

" I am equally present in all beings; there is none hateful or dear to Me. They, however, who devoutly worship Me abide in Me; and I too stand revealed in them." * (*Gītā* 9.29)

तस्मात्सैव ग्राह्या मुमुक्षुभिः ॥ ३३ ॥

33. THEREFORE, THEY WHO DESIRE LIBERATION (FROM WORLDLY BONDAGE) MUST ADOPT THE PATH OF DEVOTION ALONE.

Devotion does indeed tear asunder (a seeker's) worldly bondage without any effort,

* समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥

(गीता ९.२९)

may, the Lord Himself becoming his Beloved enacts Divine pastimes with him.

(Says Goswami Tulasidas —)

" But this supreme state of final beatitude is most difficult to attain, so declare the saints as well as the Puranas, Vedas and Āgamas (Tantras). By worshipping Śrī Rāma, my lord, the same beatitude comes unsolicited even against our will." *

The liberation, extremely difficult to attain and not easily attainable even through other severe disciplines forces itself unsolicited on the devotee but that devotee - (according to Goswami Tulasidas) —

" spurns final emancipation and remains enamoured of devotion." **

*

अति दुर्लभ कैवल्य परम पद ।

संत पुरान निगम आगम वद ॥

राम भजत सोइ मुकुति गोसाई ।

अनइच्छित आवइ बरिआई ॥

(रा.च.मा. ७.११८/३, ४)

**

मुक्ति निरादर भगति लुभाने ॥

(रा.च.मा. ७.११८/७)

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He does not even cast a glance at liberation. Why should anybody pursue any other discipline leaving aside so easy and such a supremely devotional state? Persons endowed with faith and intellect should follow the path of devotion alone.

SSSSSS

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तस्याः साधनानि गायन्त्याचार्याः ॥ ३४ ॥

34. THE ĀCHĀRYAS (NOW) DESCRIBE THE
MEANS OF ACHIEVING THAT DEVOTION.

Having explained the excellence of Bhakti (Devotion) as compared to Karma (Action) and Jñāna (Knowledge) Devarṣi Nārada now describes the means of achieving that most excellent devotion, as sung by the chief founder of the Bhakti Sāstra, the saintly devotees and the Āchāryas experienced in the quintessence of Bhakti.

तत्तु विषय त्यागात् सङ्ग त्यागाच्च ॥ ३५ ॥

35. THAT (BHAKTI - SĀDHANA) IS
ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH RENUNCIATION OF
WORLDLY OBJECTS AND WORLDLY
ASSOCIATION.

The mind of every Jīva (embodied soul) is naturally a fountain of love, because the Jīva is an eternal part-consciousness of God alone, the embodiment of Supreme Bliss and Supreme

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Love; but its love-stream being directed towards worldly objects has become vitiated. This is why that love is being transformed into sorrow - producing lust only and for this reason alone there is no manifestation of its Divine and godward aspect. For the manifestation of the Divine aspect of love it is necessary to turn its direction from the world towards God. There are two methods of doing this - (1) renunciation of worldly objects in the very form, and (2) renunciation of attachment for worldly objects. They, who hold that Devotion to God will be attained even while they are attached to worldly objects while they are engaged in the unrestricted accumulation and enjoyment of worldly objects to their hearts' content, or there is no necessity at all to renounce worldly objects and attachment thereto in the path of Devotion to the Lord, are labouring under a great delusion. Indeed in devotion nothing is left at all for our own enjoyment. When there remains no enjoyer at all, how can then the objects of enjoyment exist? There remains the Lord alone, the substratum of our life as the sole enjoyer and we become the objects of God's enjoyment with all our limbs and all our belongings. He alone is the Puruṣa (Enjoyer) and all other objects are Prakṛti to be enjoyed by Him. In these circumstances no object of enjoyment belonging to the devotee himself is

left at all. Accepting this as a high state of spiritual advancement if a person wants to escape this even then he too has to renounce progressively the objects of enjoyment and the attachment thereto as far as practicable during the period of his endeavour. When the body is absorbed in enjoyment and the mind is attached to worldly objects where then will he get another body and mind to render services to the Beloved God? Therefore, renunciation of worldly objects is indispensable. What to speak of external enjoyment even mental enjoyment will have to be given up; for an axiom it is that the mind will get attached to the object it meditates upon. The Lord says in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* —

" The mind of a man dwelling on the objects of sense gets attached to them. (Even so) the mind of one (engaged in) contemplation on Me gets absorbed in Me alone." *

(Bha. XI.xiv.27)

Wherever you fix the mind, it will get attached there alone and this fixation has to be done only through the senses. The kind of sights we repeatedly see, the words we listen

* विषयान् ध्यायतश्चित्तं विषयेषु विषज्जते ।
 मामनुस्मरतश्चित्तं मय्येव प्रविलीयते ॥
 (भा० ११.१४.२७)

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to, the food we take, the objects we smell and touch, the mind will dwell upon them over and over again; and the more it dwells upon an object the greater will grow its attachment to it. If we attend a theatre and listen to the music of a prostitute, the mind will get attached to them; (on the other hand) if we see the Līlās of devotees and listen to Kīrtana, the mind will get attached to them. Therefore, the persons aspiring for devotion must renounce all the sense-objects which are adverse to God. Really speaking, by the renunciation of sense-objects mentioned in this aphorism we should understand the renunciation of only those worldly objects which, drawing our mind away from God, apply it to the sense-objects - worldly phenomena. The body and mind should be ardently engaged in activities like meditation, remembrance of God, Kīrtana, worship of God, offering hospitality to holy men and Satsanga etc. which are agreeable to God. And even those worldly objects whose accumulation and enjoyment are absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the body or of dependent relations should be collected or enjoyed as far as possible in a very small quantity and that too in accordance with the scriptures taking that to be the command of God, without giving any room in the mind to a desire for results and only for the sake of God's pleasure. Enjoyment of this

nature is considered to be as good as renunciation. On the other hand, when an object is renounced only outwardly and yet the mental craving for it continues, that does not constitute true renunciation then. That is why in this aphorism the necessity of renouncing sense-objects along with the renunciation of attachment too has been mentioned. In the *Mahābhārata* it is stated :-

" Renunciation only means the renunciation both of the objects of enjoyment as well as attachment to them. " * Ma. Bha. Sā. Par 162.17 (Gita Press); 156.17 (Bhandarkar)

This kind of renunciation alone will lead to the renunciation of the longing for sense-objects and only the heart free from sense-objects can become the Divine abode for the Love of God. Indeed on the realization of Divine Love, the renunciation of the objects of enjoyment exists there naturally. It is said in the *Rāmacharitamānasa* II.323/8 —

" The blessed souls who are devoted to Śrī Rāma renounce like vomit the splendour of

*

त्यागः स्नेहस्य यत्यागो विषयाणां तथैव च ।

म.भा. शान्तिपर्व

१६२.१७ (गीता प्रेस)

१५६.१७ (भण्डारकर)

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Lakṣmī (the wealth and enjoyments of the world.)" * (R. ca. Ma. 2.323/8)

After having tasted nectar and profited by its qualities, at poison why would anybody ever cast a glance ? Of course even to attain that nectar - even to move (speedily) in that direction there is the necessity of renouncing the poison of sense-objects. Supreme happiness lies in applying oneself to God alone after renouncing the attachment to sense-objects. The Lord says —

" How could that happiness fall to the lot of those who have set their mind on sense-delights, — the happiness which is enjoyed with Me as his self, O noble one, by him who has fixed his mind on Me and expects no gratification from any (other) source ? "

(Bha. XI.xiv.12) **

* रमा विलासु राम अनुरागी । तजत बमन जिमि जन बडभागी ॥
(रा.च.मा. २.३२३/८)

** मय्यर्पितात्मनः सभ्य निरपेक्षस्य सर्वतः ।
मयाऽऽत्मना सुखं यत्तत्कुतः स्याद्विषयात्मनाम् ॥
(पाठ ११.१४.१२)

अव्यावृत्तभजनात् ॥ ३६ ॥

36. THROUGH CEASELESS BHAJANA
(SUCCESS IS ATTAINED IN THE PRACTICE OF
DEVOTION) —

Bhajana is the primary factor in the practice of devotion, it is both the means and the end. To those who have attained Divine Love, ceaseless Bhajana becomes natural, and those persons who aspire to attain Divine Love should practise ceaseless Bhajana. Errs he who seeks to attain either liberation or Divine Love without practising Bhajana. Goswami Tulasidasji says —

" Churning of water may possibly yield ghee and pressing of sand possibly oil but without Bhajana of the Lord none can cross the ocean of worldly existence (metempsychosis) — this axiom is irrefutable." *

(Ra. ca. ma. VII.122)

Therefore, the practice of Bhajana is indeed indispensable. As far as the practicant

*
वारि मयें घृत होइ बरु सिकता ते बरु तेल ।
बिनु हरि भजन न भव तरिअ यह सिद्धांत अपेल ॥
(रा.च.मा. ७/१२२)

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treading the path of devotion is concerned, to him this means alone has a special significance. If after withdrawing the mind from worldly objects it is not fixed on God, it will again return speedily to them alone. Renunciation of worldly objects constitutes Vairāgya (dispassion) and Bhajana of the Lord, Abhyāsa (practice). Through them alone, dispassion and practice, Divine Love in its purest form is attained. But the Bhajana which is practised now and abandoned after a while, which is practised one day and not the next day - that Bhajana is not based on love and reverence and not ceaseless either. That practice of Bhajana alone becomes accomplished of purpose which is performed always, goes on continuously and with reverence. In his *Yogādarsana* (1.14) Maharsi Patanjali says —

" Practice becomes firmly rooted only when it is continuously carried on with reverence for a long time." *

Realization of God is indeed accomplished easily through such constant and uninterrupted

* स तु दीर्घकालनैरन्तर्यसत्कारसेवितो रटभूमिः ।

(पा.यो.द. १.१४)

remembrance of God. The Lord Himself too says in the *Gītā*, VIII.14 —

" Arjuna, whosoever always and constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind, to that Yogi ever absorbed in Me I am easily attainable." *

Therefore, all activities of the body — bathing, eating, professional business should be carried on dwelling upon God uninterruptedly and with love. Being combined with Divine remembrance, every activity will turn into an act of Bhajana. Thus there should not be a moment's break in the performance of Bhajana. If one cannot meditate upon the Divine Form, one should at least remember the Divine Name continuously. Through the remembrance of the Divine Name, the mind and life will become purified and exclusive love will well up for the holy lotus feet of God. An easy method for practising Nāma-Japa is that fixing the mind on one's breathing operation, one should simultaneously continue to utter the Divine Name mentally and in a gentle voice too in rhythm with the inhalations and exhalations.

* अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥

(गीता ८.१४)

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SATSANGA

This Sādhana may be practised at all times - while getting up or sitting, walking about, sleeping and standing. On the practice taking a firm root, the mind becoming devoid of all distractions will apply itself incessantly to dwelling upon God. A majority of eminent devotees and saints had made use of this Sādhana. Says Mahatma Charandasji -

" When Japa is performed through the breath, not a single doubt lingers." *

Similarly, Kabirji says -

" Remember (God) through every breath, this is indeed the best of methods." **

It means that God's Form, glory, mysteries, attributes, pastimes or Name - all these should be dwelt upon like the ceaseless flow of oil. This alone constitutes uninterrupted Bhajana.

लोकेऽपि भगवद्गुणश्रवणकीर्तनात् ॥ ३७ ॥

37. EVEN IN THE WORLDLY SOCIETY, THROUGH LISTENING TO AND RECITATION OF GOD'S ATTRIBUTES (THE PRACTICE OF DEVOTION IS ACCOMPLISHED).

* स्वासा माहीं जपेतं दुविधा रहे न कोय ।

** साँस साँस सुमिरन करौ, यह उपाय अति नीक ।

We should indeed dwell upon God constantly with our mind but even in the midst of people we should always listen to and talk about God's attributes only with our ears and tongue respectively. The effort to dwell upon God with our mind will succeed only when our senses too remain engaged in the activities connected with God alone. Hearing and talking generally constitute the ban for all the activities. If the talk about the sense-objects will always be pouring into our ears and the tongue will always be speaking about the sense-objects, dwelling constantly upon God then should be considered almost impossible; but if the ears and tongue remain engaged in God - they will have no leisure at all for any other work; other senses and the mind too will then by themselves become attached to God. Ears and tongue should, therefore, always be kept engaged in only listening to and chanting the Name, attributes and pastimes etc. of the Lord. These are the means to make the life accomplished of purpose. If the success of life is considered to consist only in remaining alive, breathing, eating and copulating etc., do not the trees then remain alive? Do the blacksmith's bellows not breathe? Do the beasts not eat and copulate? This is why the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* (II.iii.19, 20) says -

" The human beast who has never heard the story of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the elder brother of

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Gada) has been declared to be as good as a dog, a swine, a camel and a donkey. The ears of a man who does not hear (the stories of the exploits of the Lord (whose doings are marvellous) are mere holes (that serve no useful purpose); and his tongue is as bad as that of a frog if it does not recount the stories of Lord Viṣṇu (who is extolled in numerous ways)." *

This very idea has been expressed by Goswami Tulasidasji thus —

" The ears of those who have never heard the stories of Śrī Hari are no better than

* श्वविड्वराहोष्ट्रसरैः संस्तुतः पुरुषः पशुः ।
न यत्कर्णपथोपेतो जातु नाम गदाग्रजः ॥
बिले बतोरुक्रमविक्रमान् ये
न शृण्वतः कर्णपुटे नरस्य ।
जिह्वासती दार्दुरिकेव सूत
न चोपगायत्युरुगायगाथाः ॥
(भट० २.३.१६, २०)

snake-holes. The tongue that does not sing the praises of Rāma is just like the tongue of a frog." *

(Ra. ca. ma. I.112.2, 6)

Towards the end of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, (XII.xii.48, 49) it is stated —

"** They are indeed false and ignoble

* जिन्ह हरिकथा सुनी नहि काना ।
 श्रवन रंघ्र अहि भवन समाना ॥
 जो नहि करइ राम गुन गाना ।
 जीह सो दादुर जीह समाना ॥
 (रा.च.मा. १.११२/२, ६)

मृषा गिरस्ता ह्यसतीरसत्कथा
 न कथ्यते यद् भगवानघोक्षजः ।
 तदेव सत्यं तद् ह्यैव मङ्गलं
 तदेव पुण्यं भगवद्गुणोदयम् ॥
 तदेव रम्यं रुचिरं नवं नवं
 तदेव शश्वन्मनसो महोत्सवम् ।
 तदेव शोकार्णवशोषणं नृणां
 यदुत्तमश्लोकयशोऽनुगीयते ॥
 (पा० १२.१२.४८, ४९)

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utterances and contain the stories of the unrighteous, of which Lord Viṣṇu (who is above sense-perception) does not form a theme. That utterance alone (on the other hand) is true, that alone huzza ! is blessed, that alone is sacred and is the fountain-head of divine excellence, (nay) that alone is pleasant, that alone gives newer and newer delight, that alone is a perennial source of great rejoicing to the mind and (finally) that is the only means of drying up the ocean of grief of men, through which the glory of Lord Viṣṇu (of sacred renown) is constantly sung."

We should, therefore, listen to the attributes and Names of the Lord with our ears and chant them with the tongue. Unalloyed love towards the Lord arises from this practice alone.

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* XI.xxvi.29, says the Lord —

" They who listen to them, sing them and as a matter of fact heartily approve of them and are respectful towards Me, nay, exclusively devoted to Me (expecting no other return) and are full of reverence,

acquire devotion to Me." *

Śrī Śukadevajī says —

" The man who celebrates with reverence the aforesaid advent and exploits of Lord Viṣṇu, the adored of the gods (themselves), is completely absolved from all sins. A man recounting as aforesaid the most auspicious infantile and other sports, full of delightful divine feats, of the Almighty Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the Dispeller of the agony of His devotees), heard of here (in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata) as well as in the other scriptures, bids fair to attain supreme devotion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the goal of ascetics of the highest order." (Bha. XI.xxxi.27, 28) **

* ता ये शृण्वन्ति गायन्ति ह्यनुमोदन्ति चादृताः ।

मत्पराः श्रद्धाघानाश्च भक्तिं बिन्दन्ति ते मयि ॥

(भा० ११.२६.२६)

** य एतद्देवदेवस्य विष्णोः कर्माणि जन्म च ।

कीर्तयेच्छ्रद्धया मर्त्यः सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥

इत्थं हरेर्भगवतो रुचिरावतार-

वीर्याणि बालचरितानि च शन्तमानि ।

अन्यत्र चेह च श्रुतानि गृणन् मनुष्यो

भक्तिं परां परमहंसगतौ लभेत ॥

(भा० ११.३१.२७, २८)

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The Lord says —

" What else remains to be achieved by the pious soul who has attained devotion to Me, endowed with endless virtues (potencies), the (ultimate) Cause of all, the embodiment of (Truth,) Consciousness and Bliss." *
(Bha. XI.xxvi.30)

Listening to and chanting of the Lord's Name results in great merit. The atmosphere gets purified to that extent to which the resounding vibrations of the Divine Name spread. At the time of death if the Lord's Name comes out of a person's mouth with his last breath with any sentiment whatsoever, he attains the supreme status. The messengers of Death (Yama) cannot visit a place where the Lord's Name is chanted. Thus keeping off

* भक्तिं लब्धवतः साधोः किमन्यदवशिष्यते ।
मय्यनन्तगुणे ब्रह्मण्यानन्दानुभवात्मनि ॥

(भा० ११.२६.३०)

from the ten offences * against the Name, we should certainly utter, chant and listen to the Lord's Name. It is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* VI.ii.14, 18 —

" The learned recognize the articulation of a name of Lord Viṣṇu as capable of eradicating all one's sins even when it is intended to denote someone else, or when it is uttered jestingly (in love but not jeeringly) or as an interjection in the midst of a song or out of (seeming) disrespect

* The ten offences against the Name are :-
 (1) censure of saints, (2) discrimination between the different Names of God as if one is superior and another is inferior, (3) insult of the preceptor, (4) censure of the scriptures, (5) to regard the Name as mere eulogy (i.e. to consider that it is simply praise and nothing more, the result is not like that), (6) to commit sin under the shelter of the Name, (7) to compare the merit of the Name with the merits arising from dharma, austerity, charity, and sacrifices etc., (8) to expound the Name to persons lacking faith, averse to God and those not wanting to listen to it, (9) not to love the Name even after hearing its glory, and (10) to remain attached to egotism, sense of mineness and the objects of sense-enjoyments etc.

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(but not real; for disrespect actually shown to the Lord or a jeer flung at Him constitutes in itself an unpardonable sin). Any name of the Lord of excellent renown, which is distinctly pronounced (by a man) - (whether) knowingly (with the consciousness that it wipes out all one's sins) or unknowingly (without such knowledge) - destroys a man's sins (as surely) as a fire consumes the fuel (under all circumstances, no matter whether it has been kindled by a man who knows its burning properties or by an innocent child who is unaware of its burning capacity). " *

The glory of the Divine Name has been sung in all the sacred scriptures and by all the saints.

* साङ्केत्यं पारिहास्यं वा स्तोमं हेलनमेव वा ।
वैकुण्ठनामग्रद्वणमशेषाघहरं विदुः ॥
अज्ञानादथवा ज्ञानादुत्तमश्लोकनाम यत् ।
सङ्कीर्तितमघं पुंसो दहेदेधो यथानलः ॥

(भा० ६.२.१४, १८)

The following verses of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* are worthy of being pondered over. Devi Devahuti addressing Lord Kapiladeva says —

" Oh, how wonderful that even a pariah (who cooks the flesh of dogs) becomes highly venerable only because he has Your name on the tip of his tongue ! Nay, they who utter Your Name have (thereby or in their previous life) practised austere penance, poured oblations into the sacred fire, bathed (in sacred waters), conducted themselves well, and even recited the Vedas. " *

(Bha. III. xxxiii. 7)

(And again, says the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*) —

" Uttering at the top of his voice the formula ' हरये नमः ' — 'Hail to Śrī Hari' (even) involuntarily (without any conscious effort on his part) when fallen (in a well etc.),

* अहो बत श्वपचोऽतो गरीयान्
यज्जिह्वाग्रे वर्तते नाम तुभ्यम् ।
तेषुस्तपस्ते जुहुवुः सस्मुरार्या
ब्रह्मानूचुर्नाम शृणन्ति ये ते ॥

(या० ३. ३३. ७)

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stumbled (while ascending a staircase), afflicted or after sneezing, a man is absolved from all sin. Entering the mind of men (even) while His Name or praise is being loudly chanted or even His glory is heard of (by them), the infinite Lord, the wise declare, puts an end to all their misfortune in the same way as the sun dispels darkness and a tempestuous gale disperses the clouds." *

(Bha. XII.xii.46, 47)

This is the result of uttering the Name involuntarily. What to say when the Name is uttered lovingly. This is why Goswami Tulasidasji says —

* पतितः स्खलितश्चार्तः क्षुत्त्वा वा विवशो भुवन् ।
हरये नम इत्युच्चैर्मुच्यते सर्वपातकात् ॥

सङ्कीर्त्यमानो भगवाननन्तः
श्रुतानुभावो व्यसनं हि पुंसाम् ।
प्रविश्य चित्तं विधुनोत्यशेषं
यथा तमोऽर्कोऽभ्रमिवातिवातः ॥

(भा० १२.१२.४६, ४७)

" If men repeat His Name even in a helpless state, sins committed by them in a series of previous existence are burnt away; while those who devoutly remember Him are able to cross the ocean of mundane existence as if it were mere a hollow made by the hoof of a cow." * (Ra. ca. ma. I.118.3, 4)

Therefore, for the attainment of devotion, constant and ceaseless chanting of, listening to and dwelling upon the Name, attributes and glory of the Lord undoubtedly constitute the Supreme Sādhana.

मुख्यतस्तु महत्कृपयैव भगवत्कृपालेशाद्वा ॥ ३८ ॥

38. BUT THE MEANS (TO ATTAIN LOVING DEVOTION) IS MAINLY THROUGH THE GRACE OF (LOVING) DEVOTEES OR AN IOTA OF THE LORD'S GRACE.

After describing the Sādhana consisting of constant Bhajana, Śravaṇa and Kīrtana, abandoning the sense-objects and the attachment thereto, such a Sādhana is now described

* बिबसहुँ जासु नाम नर कहहीं । जनम अनेक रचित अब दहहीं ॥
सादर सुमिरन जे नर करहीं । भव वारिधि गोपद ह्व तरहीं ॥
(रा.च.मा. १.११८/३, ४)

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through the influence of which alone the former three are attained automatically - that Sādhana is the 'grace of exalted souls'. The Mahāpuruṣas are indeed gracious, but it is very difficult to associate with them with faith and confidence. After coming into association with exalted souls, sense-objects are automatically got rid off. We have got to perform Śravaṇa and Kirtana also because of association with them and indeed it is inevitable that one remembers what one listens to, talks about and sees day and night. But it must be borne in mind that these exalted souls, through whose grace alone the attainment of loving devotion - the end in itself - has been stated here, are not only simply versed in the Sāstras and are of good conduct but they are exclusively loving devotees of the Lord after having come to realize truly the essence of what He is. The glory of association with such loving devotees is colossal. This is why Ṛṣis who were learned, well-versed in the performance of Karmakāṇḍa and whose body had become smoky with the smoke of the sacrificial fires, say to Sūtājī, - an embodiment of love and who used to drink the nectarian bliss of the lotus feet of the Lord -

" We cannot compare with a moment's fellowship of loving devotees of the Lord

either heavenly bliss or even final beatitude (the cessation of birth and death), much less the enjoyments sought after by mortal men." * (Bha. I.xviii.13)

Based on this alone it is said in the *Ramacharitamānasa*, V.4 —

" In one scale of the balance, dear son, put together the delights of heaven and the bliss of final beatitude; but they will all be outweighed by a moment's joy derived from communion with the saints." **

This is not the glory of that Satsanga which through the purification of the heart results in the attainment of liberation. Because here even the comparison of such Satsanga for the twinkling of an eye with liberation is described as incongruous. Herein, therefore, is described that grace of those loving devotees,

* तुलयाय लवेनापि न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवम् ।
भगवत्सङ्गिसङ्गस्य मर्त्यानां किमुताशिषः ॥

(भा० १.१८.१३)

** तात स्वर्गं अपवर्गं सुखं धरिअ तुला एक अंग ।
तूल न ताहि सकल मिळि जो सुख लव सतसंग ॥

(रा.च.मा. ५.४)

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who having realized God, being intoxicated with the bliss of God-love, having renounced liberation and being associated with the Lord (even associated with the Līlās of the Lord, full of sovereignty in its entirety and revelling in the supremely sweet Līlās) which naturally leads to the attainment not only of liberation but even the devotion in the form of God-love, because such loving devotees do not long for liberation at all. Rather they disdain even the longing for liberation considering it as a fiendish obstacle in originating the loving devotion for the Lord. The Lord who cannot be brought under control even by Yoga and knowledge etc. becomes (easily) subservient to that person who has earned the grace of such loving devotees and who remains associated with such devotees. This is why the Lord Himself says to the loving devotee Uddhava —

" (The glorious Lord began again): Neither Yoga (consisting of eight limbs enumerated in the Yoga-Sūtras of Patanjali) nor Sāṅkhya (knowledge of the distinctive character of the different categories discussed in the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy) nor righteousness (consisting of non-violence, benevolence etc.), study of the Vedas (or Japa of the Divine Name), austerity and renunciation nor pouring

oblations into the sacred fire and works of public utility (such as the digging of wells and tanks and the laying out of gardens) nor (the bestowal of) gifts, (observing) fasts, worship of gods, muttering secret spells, resorting to holy waters and places of pilgrimage, (undertaking) sacred observances (such as purity of body and mind) and the (five) forms of self-abnegation (non-violence etc.) gain Me over as does Satsanga capture Me, — Satsanga, which actually puts an end to all (other) attachments." * (Bha. XI.xii.1, 2)

This is so because all other Sādhana's lead to the attainment of worldly enjoyments and heaven etc. if performed with a selfish motive and purification of the heart and liberation if performed with a disinterested motive. Entirely independent, exclusive and unalloyed love alone is indeed the only direct means to enthrall God, the reveller in (His)

*

न रोचयति मां योगो न सांख्यं धर्म एव च ।

न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्त्यागो नेष्टापूर्ते न दक्षिणा ॥

व्रतानि यज्ञश्छन्दांसि तीर्थानि नियमा यमाः ।

यथावरुन्धे सत्सङ्गः सर्वसङ्गापहो हि माम् ॥

(५१० ११.१२.१, २)

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pastimes and who cannot be attained by any means out of them whatsoever. He is attained only through the bountiful grace of the exalted loving devotees *associated with the Lord.*

(Says Goswami Tulasidas —)

" Devotion is independent and a mine of all blessings; men, however, cannot attain it except through the fellowship of saints." *
(Ra. ca. ma. VII.44/5)

Of course, if God wills He can Himself bestow His love; Love can be attained even through an iota of His grace. Goswamiji has said —

" Nowhere can we find a lord like Śrī Rāma, by an iota of whose grace even the dull-witted Tulasidas has found supreme peace."
(Ra. ca. ma. VII.129/19, 20) **

* भगति सुतंत्र सकल सुख खानी । बिनु सतसंग न पावहिं प्रानी ॥
(रा.च.मा. ७.४४/५)

** जाकी कृपा लवलेस ते मतिमंद तुलसीदासहूँ ।
पायो परम विश्रामु राम समान प्रभु नाहीं कहूँ ॥
(रा.च.मा. ७.१२६/१६, २०)

But the Jīvas (embodied souls) can attain even a particle of the grace of the Lord, who is ever showering it, through the compassion of divine exalted souls alone. The chief means, therefore, is the association with such loving devotees alone. Nevertheless, to attain such association is not in our hands ! This is why in the next aphorism Devarṣi Nārada describes the association with Mahatmas difficult to attain.

महत्सङ्गस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च ॥ ३६ ॥

39. BUT THE ASSOCIATION WITH MAHĀPURUṢAS IS DIFFICULT TO ATTAIN, IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE AND UNFAILING.

In this world, it is very difficult to meet persons who are devoted to their duties, who are of right conduct, who have a saintly nature and who are endowed with divine virtues. Like genuine diamonds true sadhus are indeed very few among the so-called sectarian groups of sadhus and preachers; however, righteous men, ritualists and a few Jñānīs can indeed be found on searching. But such truly loving devotees through whose mere compassion, one can attain Divine Love, supremely difficult to attain and longed for by Yogis and Jñānīs are indeed difficult to find. It is for this reason that it is considered very difficult to come across such Mahatmas. Even if we do, it is very difficult

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to recognize them; because in the external behaviour even hypocrites and actors can exhibit the same symptoms to some extent. Shedding of tears, crying, laughing and yelling alone are not the characteristics of loving devotees. Various external causes too can bring them about. Moreover, some few true lovers can indeed be such as have attained a state even beyond these characteristics and whose external conduct may be outside the ken of ordinary persons. Loving devotees indeed do not go about telling any and everybody to recognize them as such and who will recognize them for the mere asking. To recognize such desireless devotees is, therefore, very difficult indeed and this is why association with them has been declared difficult. But fortunately if we do come across such Mahatmas, then even to meet them unknowingly can never go in vain; because it is unfailing in its effect. When even the association with ordinarily righteous persons and learned sadhus is capable of warding off sins, affliction and poverty by bringing about the purification of the heart, in that case the blessed sight of these divinely loving devotees whose heart is brimming over with Divine Love, who are embodiments of Love and Bliss and whose mere remembrance destroys sins, does undoubtedly produce a momentous result.

Just as a man having gone to sleep on the dark night of Amāvasyā (last night of the dark fortnight of a lunar month) does not experience the presence of light until he awakes, if he continues to sleep even after sunrise, though the light does get flooded simultaneously with the rising of the sun; and just as a rich man transfers his wealth worth crores to some poor man whom he loves, the poor man then does become rich as soon as the transfer has taken place, but he considers himself as poor indeed so long as he does not come to know of this fact. Even so one does get the light of the sun in the form of knowledge and the supreme treasure in the form of love by annihilating the sins and darkness in the form of ignorance through even the unconscious association with a God-loving Mahāpuruṣa, but one does not attain bliss so long as one does not come to know of this fact due to remaining unaware of the gain. No doubt it does not take long to become aware of this state. This is why the association with Mahatmas is described infallible (productive of sure results).

लभ्यतेऽपि तत्कृपयैव ॥ ४० ॥

40. THE ASSOCIATION (WITH MAHĀPURUṢAS) TOO IS ATTAINED THROUGH HIS (GOD'S) GRACE ALONE.

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No doubt the association with such a saint comes about through the grace of Lord Hari alone. To Him alone whom the Lord wishes to make His own by bestowing His grace, He sends a loving devotee identified with Himself and capable of tying Him up in a bond of love. In reality, the Lord's grace and association with exalted saints are dependent on each other. One does not experience God's grace without the association with exalted saints and one does not come across such saints without His grace. Śrī Vibhīṣaṇa too experienced the Lord's grace after meeting Śrī Hanūmān, this is why he said —

" But I am now confident, Hanūmān, that Śrī Rāma will shower His grace on me; for one can never meet a saint without Śrī Hari's grace." * (Ra. ca. ma. V.6/4)

तस्मिंस्तज्जने भेदाभावात् ॥ ४१ ॥

41. BECAUSE BETWEEN GOD AND HIS DEVOTEES THERE IS NO DISTINCTION.

*

अब मोहि भा भरोस हनुमंता ।

बिनु हरिकृपा मिलहि नहि संता ॥

(रा.च.मा. ५.६/४)

The devotees of the Lord are His very form (a knower of Brahma becomes Brahma alone *). They who render services to devotees serve the Lord Himself. Devotees abide in the Lord's heart and the Lord in the heart of a devotee. The Lord has said —

" Pious souls (devotees) are My (very) heart (most beloved of Me), while I am the (very) heart (the most beloved) of the righteous. They do not cognize anything else (dearer) than Me nor do I know in the least anyone else (dearer) than them." ** (Bha. IX.4.68)

Bharata adores Śrī Rāma and Śrī Rāma
Bharata --

" Has any one loved Rāma ever as Bharata, whose name is ever on the lips of Rāma, while Rāma's name is repeated by the whole world ? " *** (Ra. ca. ma. II.217/7)

* ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति

** साधवो हृदयं मह्यं साधूनां हृदयं त्वहम् ।
मदन्यत् ते न जानन्ति नाहं तेभ्यो मनागपि ॥

(भा० ए.४.६८)

*** भरत सरिस को राम सनेही ।

जग जपु राम रामु जप जेही ॥

(रा.च.मा. २.२१७/७)

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DEVOTION AND THE GLORY OF
SATSANGA

In connection with the Gopīs, the embodiment of love - the Lord has said, 'O Arjuna, the Gopīs alone know My glory, My adoration, faith in Me and the working of My mind in essence and nobody else.' *

What is the distinction between the Lord and such loving devotees ? The Lord has indeed said --

" They, however, who devoutly worship Me abide in Me; and I too stand revealed in them. " ** (Gītā, 9.29)

Such devotees remain so absorbed in God's love that they begin to experience actually the Lord's form (in themselves) forgetting their own external form. While searching for the Lord, the Gopīs became so engrossed in Him that they started enacting the pastimes of the Lord alone. Sings Nandadas --

* मन्माहात्म्यं मत्सपर्यां मच्छ्रद्धां मन्मनोगतम् ।
जानन्ति गोपिकाः पार्थ नान्ये जानन्ति तत्त्वतः ॥

(लघुभागवतामृत उ.स. आ.पु. वचनम्)

** ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥

(गीता ६.२६)

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" The pastimes of Mohana (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), the sweet darling, are befitting to them and them alone. They became so engrossed in Him that they knew not who they were." *

तदेव साध्यतां तदेव साध्यताम् ॥ ४२ ॥

42. (THEREFORE,) AIM AT ATTAINING THAT (ASSOCIATION WITH MAHĀPURUṢAS) ALONE; AIM AT ATTAINING THAT ALONE.

In order therefore to attain Divine Love, cultivate an earnest longing for the association with such loving devotees of the Lord alone. We shall come across loving saints through the grace of the Lord and through the glory of the association with saints alone, we shall become free from our sins and afflictions and be able to attain unalloyed Divine Love. There is a great mystery behind this. Suppose there is a highly dignified monarch who is as well a great lover, but one does not have love for any and everybody. In his court and in his kingdom, the king can exhibit his influence and majesty in great measure, but he cannot reveal to anybody the secrets of his love with his own

* मोहन लाल रसालकी लीला इनहीं सोहैं ।
केवल तन्मय भई कछु न जानैं हम को हैं ॥

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mouth. As his subjects we can see him and talk to him according to the rules; but neither we can inquire of him the secrets of his love nor indeed can he tell us. If we wish to know the inner secrets of his love or to enter the realm of his love, we shall then have to associate with one of his exclusive lovers - with whom the king has an unalloyed relation of personal love (beyond the State regulations) and with whom he has mutual and open conversation connected with love - and winning his confidence we shall have to know the mystery of the king's love through him, through him alone we shall have to get our feelings of love conveyed to the king and prove our eligibility. When the king regards us as eligible, he will then include us too in the love-conversations like him. Similarly, the Lord Himself does not disclose the secrets of His love with His own mouth. The Lord had sent Uddhava to the Gopīs in order to get him initiated in the secrets of love. Just as the confidantes of the beloved get to know the love mystery of the lover and the most secret things about his love through his beloved alone, even so an aspirant comes to know the secret of God's love too only through the loving devotees of the Lord. And indeed it is disclosed to that aspirant alone whom the Lord considers as eligible and on whom He wishes to bestow the

secret of His love through His grace. Because the loving devotees of the Lord - their most beloved object of love - cannot disclose the secret of His love before anybody without His will and permission. To start with an aspirant has to become eligible. When an exclusive longing for the unalloyed and the sublimest love for the Lord awakens in his heart, his heart then begins to weep for the love of the Lord. The Omniscient and Blissful Lord listens to the agonized crying of his heart and then out of His grace, He sends some one of his loving devotees to him by prompting or hinting to him. His love is then first put to a test. If his love is devoid of desire and exclusive and he produces a feeling of confidence in the mind of that loving devotee about his eligibility by his actions and conduct, he then conveys his message to the Lord and after obtaining the Lord's permission he discloses to him gradually the secret of love; later on as little by little his eligibility develops, in like manner, he leads him ahead further and further with God's permission in the realm of Divine Love and finally he attains Divine Love as a consequence of the abounding grace of the Lord. Not being omniscient, the king or his friend can even be deceived by anybody but the Lord and the loving devotee appointed by Him can never be duped. One who has a longing to attain Divine Love should, therefore, become eligible first by practising the means described by the Devarsi

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so that the Lord's grace may dawn upon him and he may be considered as eligible for the association with loving devotees of the Lord. *pari passu* he ought to develop intensely the desire for the association with the loving devotees of the Lord, because without their association the attainment of Divine Love is extremely difficult. In order, therefore, to propagate His unalloyed Love the Lord by keeping awake the longing for love in their mind does not bestow on them the liberation in the form of merger with Himself even though they are fully qualified for it; and this is why abandoning the pleasure of such love-pastimes the loving devotees never entertain a desire for liberation. Even though liberated, they come into or abide in the world merely for the propagation of love. Their compassion is without any motive. If they find an intense desire in us they will then surely bestow love upon us through their holy sight, contact, speech and abounding grace by obtaining a direction from the Lord through His Grace; because they are indeed ever on the look-out for seekers after love. It is their very mission to bestow love. Therefore, attain the association with those very loving devotees of the Lord, nay, crave for their compassion alone.

EVIL COMPANY IS THE MAIN
IMPEDIMENT IN (THE ATTAINMENT
OF) LOVING DEVOTION.

दुःसङ्गः सर्वथैव त्याज्यः ॥ ४३ ॥

43. EVIL COMPANY SHOULD INDEED BE
ALTOGETHER RENOUNCED.

Having extolled the glory of Satsanga, the Devarṣi now interdicts evil company. Just as Satsanga inclines the mind to Divine stories, Divine discourses, Divine Names, Divine Love, right conduct, the scriptures, discretion, dispassion, righteous practices, service, simplicity, humility, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, compassion, non-violence, truth, continence, pridelessness and tranquillity etc. and a man can become righteous and a supreme devotee; even so contrariwise, through evil company, a person becomes sinful and extremely attached to sense-objects by being inclined towards talks regarding sense-objects, worldly talks, slander, fondness for worldly enjoyments, evil conduct, indiscipline, imprudence, covetousness for sense-enjoyments, evil practices, prestige, hypocrisy, pride, anger, intolerance, impurity, inclemency, violence, untruth, licentiousness, egotism and restlessness etc. All the bad qualities and

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evil practices of demoniacal nature grow and spread through evil company. A man gets entirely ruined through evil company by the destruction of all his good qualities (Sadaguna). Because of Manthra's evil company alone queen Kaikeyi, the supremely amiable, affectionate and the embodiment of love, became the cause of extreme grief to Emperor Daśratha, Bharata, herself and all the denizens of Ayodhya and it was for this reason alone that she had ultimately to suffer sorrowful widowhood and to pass her life as an object of displeasure to Bharata, dear as life itself. The evil company of Śakuni became a main cause of the terrible holocaust in the Mahābhārata war. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* III.xxxi.32-34, Lord Kapil Deva says to His mother Devahūti —

" If under the influence of sensually-minded people engaged in the pursuit of sexual enjoyment and the gratification of the palate he delights in their ways again, he goes to hell as before. One should never cultivate the fellowship of those wicked fools, the toys of women, who are ever fidgety, have identified themselves with the body and therefore deserve to be pitied, nay, by whose company truthfulness, purity, compassion, control over the tongue, wisdom, prosperity, modesty, fair name,

forbearance, control of mind and the senses and good fortune are blotted out of existence." *

Therefore, it is essential for all of us indeed to renounce evil company but the persons who aspire for Divine Love should indeed renounce it with great deliberation. Lord Śrī Rāmachandrajī has said to Vibhīṣaṇa —

" It is much better to live in hell, dear Vibhīṣaṇa; but may Providence never place us in the company of the wicked." **
(Ra. ca. ma. V.45/7)

* यद्यसद्भिः पथि पुनः शिश्नोदरकृतोद्यमैः ।
आस्थितो रमते जन्तुस्तमो विरति पूर्ववत् ॥
सत्यं शौचं दया मौनं बुद्धिः श्रीर्हीर्यशः क्षमा ।
शमो दमो भगश्चेति यत्सङ्गाद्याति संक्षयम् ॥
तेष्वशान्तेषु मूढेषु खण्डितात्मस्वसाधुषु ।
सङ्गं न कुर्याच्छोच्येषु योषित्क्रीडामृगेषु च ॥

(पाठ ३.३१.३२-३४)

** बहू भल बास नरक कर ताता । दुष्ट संग जनि देह बिधाता ॥

(रा.च.मा. ५.४५/७)

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By evil company we should not understand merely the company of immoral persons alone. Any object of the senses whatsoever, which produces evil thoughts and a longing for sense-objects in our mind and leads our mind away from the path of God-realization can be termed evil company. We should neither see such an animate object nor an inanimate scene, nor listen to such a talk, nor indulge in such conversation, nor visit such a place, nor read such a book or a magazine, nor see such a picture, nor eat, smell or touch such an object, nor entertain such thoughts as may create in our mind an intense desire to dwell upon the objects of enjoyment. We must remember that at least these ten factors constitute prominent causes for the origin and growth of good and evil sentiments in man - (1) locality, (2) food, (3) water, (4) family, (5) neighbourhood, (6) scene, (7) literature, (8) reviewing, (9) vocation and (10) worship. If all these are Sattwic, association with them then is conducive to the growth of Sattwictā. Association with them alone constitutes Satsanga; and if they are Rajasic or Tamasic, association with them then constitutes evil company and by nourishing the evil of ignorance it leads to the development of all the evils. Evil company should, therefore, be renounced altogether in every way.

कामक्रोधमोहस्मृतिभ्रंशबुद्धिनाशसर्वनाशकारणत्वात् ॥ ४४ ॥

44. BECAUSE THAT (EVIL COMPANY) IS THE CAUSE OF DESIRE, ANGER, INFATUATION, CONFUSION OF MEMORY, LOSS OF REASON AND COMPLETE RUIN.

Dwelling only upon the worldly objects which gratify the senses at the time of enjoyment instead of reflecting upon the mystery relating to Divine essence and stories about His pastimes is the root of complete ruin. The mind gets attached only to the object upon which it dwells constantly or most of the time. Attachment to sense-objects grows naturally indeed through evil company - association with worldly objects and licentious men through body, speech and mind. Attachment leads to desire and this desire alone is the root of all sins, the gratification of desire leads to greed for more and the same desire when ungratified assumes the form of anger. This is why in the *Gītā* Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has declared desire born of Rajas in the form of attraction or attachment alone to be the main cause in the commission of sins. Arjuna inquired - 'O Lord, what is that impelling power which makes a man to commit sin even unwillingly as if seized by force?' In reply to this the Lord says explicitly —

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" It is desire begotten of the element of Rajas, which appears as wrath; nay, it is insatiable and grossly wicked. Know this to be the enemy in this case." * (Gītā, 3.37)

Though both greed and anger indeed originate from desire yet in this world only a few of the agreeable desires are fulfilled; most of them result in failure alone. Failure produces anger and on the awakening of anger man becomes devoid of the faculty of discrimination and reasoning. He fails to understand his good and evil in anything whatsoever, like a fiend he makes an effort leading to destruction alone. Such infatuation brings about the loss of his memory and the loss of memory results in the loss of reason. On losing reason he falls away from the auspicious path in this world as well as the next - he is totally ruined. Just this very idea the Lord has expressed in the Gītā, Chapter II, verses 62-63 —

*

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥

(गीता ३.३७)

" The man dwelling on sense-objects develops attachment for them; from attachment springs up desire, and from desire (unfulfilled) ensues anger. From anger arises infatuation; from infatuation, confusion of memory; from confusion of memory, loss of reason; and from loss of reason one goes to complete ruin. " *

Association with sense-objects and licentious persons alone is the main cause of dwelling upon sense-objects leading to total ruin, this alone constitutes evil company; one should, therefore, renounce it altogether.

तरङ्गायिता अपीमे सङ्गात्समुद्रायन्ति ॥ ४५ ॥

45. THOUGH THEY (DESIRE, ANGER ETC.) APPEAR LIKE WAVES (SMALL IN SIZE) IN THE BEGINNING YET THEY ASSUME THE DIMENSIONS OF A VAST OCEAN THROUGH EVIL COMPANY.

*

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥
क्रोधान्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

(गीता २.६२, ६३)

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OF) LOVING DEVOTION.

We should indeed be afraid even of a trifling evil, so long as evils are not destroyed root and branch; just as even a tiny spark covered by firewood and fanned by air can assume the form of a huge conflagration, even so the least suppressed evil assumes a huge form on being nourished by evil company. To start with, when the feeling of desire or anger awakens in our mind, it then appears almost like a ripple but that wavelet turns into an ocean immediately it comes into contact with evil company; later that very ocean controls the entire heart from all sides, no room is left for even the admission of righteous thoughts; that results indeed in total destruction. We should not, therefore, presume that because we have more of good qualities and less of evil ones, how evil company will then harm us? Rather we should indeed renounce ever and always evil company in every way with extreme determination.

§§§

WHO CROSSES MAYA ?

कस्तरति कस्तरति मायाम् ? यः सङ्गाँस्त्यजति
यो महानुभावं सेवते, निर्ममो भवति ॥ ४६ ॥

46. (Q.) WHO CROSSES ? WHO CROSSES
MAYA (SO DIFFICULT TO CROSS) ?

(A.) (HE) WHO RENOUNCES ALL
ATTACHMENTS, WHO SERVES EXALTED
SAINTS AND WHO IS DEVOID OF THE SENSE
OF MINENESS, (CROSSES MAYA).

For a person who seeks to swim across a river, the most essential thing is to push away the river-water with his hands and feet, to cut across water constantly; then alone a novice in the art of swimming can go across a river. He will get drowned the moment he gives up pushing away the water. Similarly, those persons who want to cross over to the other side by swimming across this river of *maya*, so highly dangerous and difficult to cross, must continue to throw aside incessantly the water in the form of egotism and worldly attachments. This river of *maya* is filled only with water in the form of egotism and worldly attachment; he, who cannot cast aside egotism

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and attachment, who does not want to renounce them, will sink to the bottomless depth by revelling in the water of this river of *maya*. This is why attachment must necessarily be renounced; but there is a possibility of his becoming exhausted and short of breath by even striking the hands and feet all the time; therefore, at intervals some support is needed where he can stay and take rest. In the case of this river of *maya* too, mere renunciation of attachment does not serve the purpose. Here too resting places are necessary. Nectarean utterances of the saints alone are those resting places - they impart fresh strength to him and through that strength man can cross over the ocean of *maya*. In fact, an aspirant who serves the saints does not have to swim on his own, he crosses over indeed without any effort by means of a stout barge in the form of the grace of the exalted saints. This is why Devarṣi advises the practice of rendering service to the exalted saints.

The Lord says in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*,
 XI. xxvi. 32 —

"Just as a strong bark is the supreme resort to those that are being drowned in water, noble souls who have realized Brahma and have attained (perfect) peace of mind are the highest resort to those who having sunk (once) to the lowest depths are coming

(once more) to the surface in the ocean of mundane existence." *

Through the service of exalted saints sins, affliction and infatuation are eliminated indeed without any difficulty.

(It is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* XI.xxvi.31) -

" (Even) as cold, dismay and darkness disappear in the case of a man who betakes himself to the glorious Agni (the god of fire) so do the rigidity and obtuseness (born of stern devotion to duty), the fear of future births and its root, ignorance, get dissolved in the case of the man who renders loving service to pious souls." **

* निमज्ज्योन्मज्जतां घोरे भवाब्धौ परमायनम् ।
सन्तो ब्रह्मविदः शान्ता नौर्ददेवाप्सु मज्जताम् ॥

(५१० ११.२६.३२)

** यथोपश्रयमाणस्य भगवन्तं विभावसुम् ।
शीतं भयं तमोऽप्येति साधून् संसेवतस्तथा ॥

(५१० ११.२६.३१)

Service of the blessed feet of the exalted saints alone is the main thing indeed for the attainment of unalloyed devotion to Lord Hari. Prahlāda, the prince among devotees and Jada-Bharata, (Bharata who used to behave deliberately like an idiot), the paragon of wisdom and crest-jewel among the ascetics, have said in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* VII.v.32 : Says Prahlāda —

" The mind of these (people) fails to approach the feet of Lord Viṣṇu (possessed of infinite strength), - the object of approaching which is to get rid of evil (in the form of transmigration), - so long as it does not seek a bath in the dust of feet of exalted souls who claim nothing as their own." *

Mahatma Jada-Bharata says to King Rahūgaṇa —

" O Rahūgaṇa, one does not attain this (consciousness) through asceticism nor

*

नैषां मतिस्तावदुरुक्रमाङ्घ्रि
स्पृशत्यनर्थापिगमो यदर्थः ।
महीयसां पादरजोऽभिषेकं
निष्किञ्चनानां न वृणीत यावत् ॥३२॥

(भा० ७.५.३२)

through (Vedic) rituals, nor (again) by dealing out food and other necessities (among the needy), nor by (duly) performing one's religious duties (pertaining to household life - such as entertaining an unexpected visitor, service of the afflicted and poor and so on), nor through a (proper) study of the Vedas nor through the worship of (the gods presiding over) water, fire and the sun, (nor by any other means) except by sprinkling one's body with the dust of feet of exalted souls." * (Bha. V.xii.12)

But it must be borne in mind that service of the exalted saints does not simply mean living in their proximity or rendering only bodily services to them. That too is duly necessary and useful; but so long as we do not act according to their instructions, we do not follow their hints and we do not mould our life according to their liking, till then the service must be considered as defective indeed.

*

रहूगणैतत्तपसा न याति
 न चेज्यया निर्वपणाद् गृहाद्वा ।
 नच्छन्दसा नैव जलाग्निमूर्त्यै-
 विना महत्यादरजोऽभिषेकम् ॥१२॥

(५१० ५.१२.१२)

Therefore, taking this into account we should always serve the exalted saints by all means.

But in this context sense of mineness is a great impediment. The tie of ownership (*mamatā*) does not let us serve the saints. This home is mine, body is mine, family is mine, wealth is mine, relations are mine, house is mine, land is mine - the Jiva (the embodied soul) is thus bound up in innumerable ties of this nature; these bonds of meum shall have to be broken. No doubt the light from the divine jewelled lamp in the form of Satsanga and service rendered to the saints dispels to a great extent the darkness of a gloomy night in the form of mineness, nevertheless, it is indeed necessary first to reduce the sense of ownership even to attend Satsanga. Therefore, accounting these objects of self-interest as full of sorrow, transient and rooted in ignorance, one should abandon altogether the sense of mineness towards them. One should hold that in this world there is nothing at all which one can call one's own. Even that body which a man not only calls his own, but also 'himself' perishes, in that case it is sheer folly indeed to have a sense of mineness in other objects. To cross over *maya* one should necessarily eradicate this sense of mineness. One who does this, crosses over *maya*.

यो विविक्तस्थानं सेवते, यो लोकबन्धमुन्मूल-
यति, निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवति, योगक्षेमं त्यजति ॥४७॥

47. (HE,) WHO RESIDES IN SECLUSION, WHO BREAKS UP WORLDLY TIES, WHO RISES BEYOND THE THREE QUALITIES (GUNA)S AND WHO RENOUNCES YOGA (SUPPLYING ONE'S NEEDS) AND KṢEMA (SAFEGUARDING ONE'S POSSESSIONS), (CROSSES OVER MAYA).

In the foregoing aphorism three methods have been indicated for crossing over *maya*, now in this aphorism four more are being pointed out and in the next two aphorisms five more methods or characteristics will be described in due order.

Renunciation of the sense of ownership cannot be brought about by living day and night in the midst of one's own objects; rather the sense of mineness increases by (such) association, an aspirant should, therefore, resort to seclusion. The Lord has enjoined in the *Gita*, 13.10 'to live in secluded places and to find no enjoyment in the company of men.' * Howsoever, a man may try to undergo a course

* विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥

गीता, १३.१०

of discipline, but so long as he lives in the company of men gripped by sensuality and in places full of worldly attractions, he will find it very difficult to apply his mind to the Lord, it is for this reason that an aspirant is advised to practise the path of devotion by living in a secluded place. In addition, it is necessary to snap worldly ties in order to tie himself up in the bond of love with the Lord. Because of getting rid of the worldly association due to living in seclusion, worldly ties will automatically be loosened. Besides, the worldly bondage breaks up by itself by reflecting repeatedly on the comparative difference between the mysteries, glory and the essence of the Lord and this world full of death and abode of sorrows.

After this the aspirant on the path of devotion will have to rise above the three Guṇas - Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. The world reveals itself only through these guṇas. This world is the product only of the guṇas; therefore, to have non-attachment or dispassion alone for the worldly objects is to become 'Nistraigunya' i.e. indifferent to these three enjoyments and their means or to become unworldly. That person alone, who is attached to sense-enjoyments and is licentious, is tied to guṇas and he alone who is attached to the

Lord and is a loving devotee of the Lord is 'Nistraiguṇya'. Why should he who is 'Nistraiguṇya' worry about yoga-kṣema i.e. the supply of wants and the preservation of what has already been attained. There is indeed no allurements at all for him in the world because he is Nistraiguṇya; and he is not desirous even of the attainment of liberation because he is a lover of God. To obtain what one does not possess is called 'yoga' and the preservation of what one has 'kṣema'. This does not merely mean supply of food and clothing; in the spiritual sense indeed yoga means God-realization or the successful means to realize God and kṣema means the preservation of the means to realize God. A loving devotee of the Lord does not care at all for yoga-kṣema in both these senses, nay, remaining intoxicated in the love of the Lord alone and inspired by Him, he is indeed ever busy in the natural performance of actions agreeable to the Lord. The Lord Himself in person attends to the yoga-kṣema of a devotee. The Lord Himself has said in the *Gītā*, 9.22 —

" The devotees, however, who loving no one else constantly think of Me, and worship Me in a disinterested spirit, to those ever united in thought with Me, I bring full

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security and personally attend to their needs." *

* अनन्याश्रित्यन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥
(गीता ६.२२)

In the holy Jagannath Puri there used to live with his family a simple-hearted and righteous brahmin. He was a great lover of the *Gītā*. Day and night he used to study and ponder over the *Gītā*. Undoubtedly he had not been able to shake off so far his sense of self-interest, nevertheless, he was a man of great faith indeed. Once he wanted to examine the meaning of every word of the *Gītā* from the practical point of view. During the course of his recitation when he came upon the word 'vahāmyaham' in the above mentioned verse, he then began to reflect whether the Lord Himself carries the necessary articles to His devotee's house. No, No. It cannot be so. The Lord must be arranging the supplies through some other means. Reflecting thus and finding the meaning of the expression 'vahāmyaham' not suitable, he scored out the above expression of the *Gītā* and wrote 'karomyaham' instead over it. The brahmin used to maintain his life by

(contd.)

Even an ordinarily faithful devotee must not worry about his food etc. Having no trust

resorting to alms. Infinite are the ways of the Lord; it began to rain cats and dogs one day. Due to not being able to stir out of the house that day, the brahmin with his family had indeed to starve the whole day. The next day when it stopped raining, the brahmin went out to beg alms. Only a short while after he had left the house, an extremely lovely boy besmeared with blood came to the brahmin's house and addressed his wife - 'This Prasāda (anything edible offered to a deity) has been sent by Panditji Maharaja.' The brahmin woman felt enamoured on seeing the boy's fascinating features and listening to his sweet words but she felt very much pained indeed to see blood streaming forth from his body. With her eyes full of tears she inquired, "what brutal person has hurt you?" Uttering the name of the brahmin lady's husband, the boy said, 'the brahmin has hurt me'. Indeed the brahmin woman was wonder-struck and said, 'He is indeed very simple and gentle, a cool-tempered man and a great devotee, why would he hurt a boy like you, so fascinating to the mind and the eyes?' The boy replied, 'I am telling the very truth, mother! He himself has cut across my body with a dart, he himself would know why he did so.'

(contd.)

in the Lord for food etc. and renouncing the path of justice, truth and righteousness, those

Saying this much and leaving the Prasāda, the boy left the place. Due to her being unmindful, the brahmin woman could not know when the child left. Not being able to comprehend anything at all, she awaited the return of her husband with an extremely aching heart. In due course the brahmin came home. The brahmin lady narrated to her husband the whole story in words which were gentle and yet poignant with resentment and grief. The Panditji was dumb-founded to listen to the wife's narration. Remembering the incident relating to the scoring out of the *Gītā* verse with a pen of *Haratāla* (yellow orpiment) he felt awfully agonized. A stream of tears began to flow from his eyes. The brahmin now realized that in reality the Lord Himself bears the burden of carrying provisions etc. to a faithful devotee of His. The *Gītā* is a limb of the Lord. By scoring out a verse of the *Gītā* the body of the Lord has been bruised. (and ultimately) repenting his actions the brahmin fell down to the ground in a swoon. (Immediately) by bestowing His blessed sight the Lord made him accomplished of all purpose. Regaining outer consciousness after a while he began to seek the Lord's forgiveness and being ecstatic he began to write the word '*vahāmyaham*' repeatedly all over the *Gītā*.

persons who seek the asylum of sin, are athiests indeed in a way. It is said —

" The Vaisnavas indeed worry in vain about food etc. Can that Lord, who sustains all the living beings of the entire universe, ever forget His devotees ? " *

यः कर्मफलं त्यजति, कर्माणि संन्यस्यति ततो निर्द्वन्द्वो

भवति ॥ ४८ ॥

48. WHO RENOUNCES THE FRUIT OF ACTIONS, NAY, WHO EVEN RENOUNCES THE ACTIONS AND THUS RENOUNCING EVERYTHING, GOES BEYOND THE PAIRS OF OPPOSITES —

He, who renounces the anxiety about yoga-kṣema, has perforce to renounce the fruit of actions, or even to renounce yoga-kṣema, the renunciation of the fruit of actions becomes necessary. As a matter of fact, from here onwards starts a narration of the characteristics of a loving devotee. These are the ideal means for the aspirants treading the paths of devotion and natural traits for achieved loving devotees !

* भोजनाच्छादने चिन्तां वृथा कुर्वन्ति वैष्णवाः ।
योऽसौ विश्वम्भरो देवः स किं दासानुपेक्षते ॥

WHO CROSSES MAYA ?

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Whatever a devotee does, he does for the sake of God alone, for himself he seeks no fruit at all of his actions. He has neither any attachment for actions nor for their fruit, rather, he continues to perform actions like a machine. But so long as he remembers that he is an instrument and he is performing actions for the sake of the Lord, he can only be called a renouncer merely of the fruit of actions; only then he will be a renouncer of actions when he will no longer be conscious (even) of the fact that he too does something. When as a result of the complete surrender of his mind and intellect, the Lord deprives him of his egotism altogether and begins to perform or make him to perform actions by installing Himself in the temple of his heart, then he will become altogether indifferent to the pairs of opposites by renouncing the actions completely. He will then have no need at all for the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, loss and gain, mine or that of another, sense of 'I' and 'You' etc. But so long such a state does not become natural to him, till then he ought to make an effort in the form of Sādhana to become indifferent to the pairs of opposites by renouncing generally the fruits of actions and relinquishing all actions which are anti-God or unnecessary. Says the Lord —

" Arjuna, the Vedas thus deal with the evolutes of the three Guṇas (modes of

Prakṛti), viz, worldly enjoyments and the means of attaining such enjoyments; be thou indifferent to these enjoyments and their means, rising above pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain etc., established in the Eternal Existence (God), absolutely unconcerned about the supply of wants and the preservation of what has been already attained, and self-controlled." *

(Gītā, II. 45)

वेदानपि संन्यस्यति, केवलमविच्छिन्नानुरागं लभते ॥ ४६ ॥

49. HE, WHO RENOUNCES EVEN THE VEDAS COMPLETELY AND WHO ATTAINS LOVE OF THE LORD IN AN UNINTERRUPTED AND UNLIMITED MEASURE —

From the point of view of Sādhana (discipline) the purport of becoming desireless is very proper indeed through the renunciation of the Vedas which bring to display the world in the form of the manifestation of the three guṇas

* त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥

(गीता २.४५)

according to the aforesaid verse (2.45 of the *Śrīmad Bhagavatgītā*. Renunciation of the motivated sentiment alone constitutes the renunciation of the Vedas. But in that state of love, which Devarṣi Nārada is describing here, a devotee simply becomes engrossed in the Lord by being submerged in the vast ocean of an uninterrupted and unbroken Love of God; this automatically leads to the relinquishment of the shelter of the Vedas, he becomes then incapable of performing correctly any worldly or vedic actions at all. The automatic transgression of all the rules indeed is one of the rules of this type of Love. This too is in accordance with the scriptures. In this state when the Vedas find their follower attaining the supreme fruit of the Vedas and feeling themselves sated at his ultimate gratification, they abandon him. This renunciation of the Vedas is not born of disrespect, rather it is rooted in satiety. He does not abandon the Vedas consciously, nay, the Vedas themselves withdraw their control over him considering him as accomplished of all purpose. In this state that loving devotee crossing over the Vedas full of positive and negative imperatives remains intoxicated simply in an ineffable Love for Lord Hari alone, nay, he is a living embodiment of Divine Love. The Lord Himself indeed sports through his body by manifesting Himself there in the form of Divine Love.

स तरति स तरति स लोकांस्तारयति ॥ ५० ॥

50. HE CROSSES (MAYA), HE CROSSES (MAYA), HE TAKES ACROSS THE (THREE) WORLDS.

Overwhelmed with joy Devarṣi Nārada is proclaiming that he, who becomes intoxicated with Divine Love in this manner, not only has been liberated himself but also liberates all the Lokas (worlds) too. He is indeed the true Tarana-Tārana (one who not only reaches the other shore oneself but is also able to take others across). Even the Lord has said in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, XI.xiv.24 — 'Such a devotee of Mine sanctifies the three worlds.' *

The question 'who crosses *maya*' raised in aphorism No. 46 has been answered in the aphorisms dealt with so far. In four aphorisms the means to attain love and the characteristics of loving devotees have been described. Now in what follows the form of that love will be described, attaining which, loving devotees attain effortlessly this state difficult to attain, in the form of natural qualities.

* मद्भक्तियुक्तो भुवनं पुनाति

(भा० ११.१४.२४)

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अनिर्वचनीयं प्रेमस्वरूपम् ॥ ५१ ॥

51. THE NATURE OF LOVE IS INEFFABLE.

There is no difference between Love and the Lord; just as it is impossible to describe Brahma through words, nay, the Vedas become speechless by simply saying 'not this', 'not this' - *neti, neti* — even so Love too cannot be described through speech. In this world also we notice that the joy we experience in our heart on attaining a dear object, on getting some news about it and on getting an auspicious opportunity to touch, embrace and have a love-talk about it, can never be described through words. That love, which can be described through speech, is altogether the external form of love. Love is indeed a matter of experience. Lord Śrī Rāma sends the following message to Śrī Jānakījī, Mother of the universe, living in Lanka —

" The reality about the chord of love that binds you and me, dear, is known to my soul alone; and my soul ever abides with you. Know this to be the essence of my

love." * (Ra. ca. ma. V.14/6, 7)

Love is experienced through the heart and the heart remains ever with the beloved. In the absence of the heart, then, from where will speech find the real stuff to describe it even in a small measure? Therefore, whatever description of love we get, it is merely indicatory - simply external. Nobody knows what Love indeed is without attaining it and on attaining it one washes one's hands off with one's heart. While in water one can pronounce words with one's mouth only so long as the mouth is above the water, when a man gets drowned in the bottomless deep, it becomes difficult then even to find the dead body of the drowned man. Similarly one, who has become submerged in the ocean of love can say nothing at all. And what those persons, who only dive superficially and float on the surface, say is merely a superficial description alone —

" He who gets drowned does not speak and he who speaks is ignorant; only some clever and wise man drowns himself in the

*

तत्त्व प्रेम कर मम अरु तोरा ।

जानत प्रिया एकु मनु मोरा ॥

सो मनु सदा रहत तोहि पाहीं ।

जानु प्रीति रसु पतनेहि माहीं ॥

(रा.च.मा. ५.१४/६, ७)

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ocean of love which is so deep." *

मूकास्वादनवत् ॥ ५२ ॥

52. JUST LIKE THE RELISHING OF A DUMB PERSON

Just as a dumb person on eating jaggery feels happy and laughs but he cannot describe its taste; even so loving devotees become submerged in bliss on experiencing love but they cannot tell anybody else the nature of that experience. In this type of love, there is engrossment (in the Lord). It is for this reason that a loving devotee does not know what he is and what he knows. Thus it was that on one occasion Śrī Rādhā said, 'O Sakhi (friend)! I know nothing at all about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Love, do not understand it and I have no suitable words to express what little I know. Indeed I know only this much that no sooner do I feel His touch within the heart, then does vanish the whole of my knowledge (Jñāna).'

* इन्हे सो बोले नहीं, बोले सो अनजान ।

गहरी प्रेम-समुद्र कोउ इन्हे चतुर सुजान ॥

प्रकाशते* कापि पात्रे ॥ ५३ ॥

53. SUCH A TYPE OF LOVE DOES EVEN MANIFEST ITSELF IN SOME RARE QUALIFIED PERSON (IN A LOVING DEVOTEE).

It is certain that the nature of love cannot be described through words, but when some blessed Mahāpuruṣa (achieved soul) intoxicated with love begins to behave like one possessed with divine ecstasy forgetting his sense of body and mind, it is then that people begin to notice openly the radiance of love to some extent. On that occasion rays of love automatically begin to radiate not only from the speech and eyes of such a Mahatma but also from every pore of his body. This manifestation of Love is the radiance of the Lord Himself. Such radiance manifests itself only in some rare Mahāpuruṣas (achieved souls).

गुणरहितं कामनारहितं प्रतिक्षणवर्धमान-

मविच्छिन्नं सूक्ष्मतरमनुभवरूपम् ॥ ५४ ॥

54. THIS LOVE IS DEVOID OF QUALITIES, IS DEVOID OF DESIRE, CONTINUES TO GROW EVERY MOMENT, IS DEVOID OF INTERRUPTION, IS MORE TENUOUS THAN TENUOUS AND IS A MATTER OF EXPERIENCE.

* Some read it as 'प्रकाश्यते'

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That love, which awakens on noticing a certain quality, can be destroyed indeed on failing to see that quality. But in real Love, qualities are not a desideratum. When does a lover find time to see the merits and demerits of his beloved? There exists a bond of natural and spontaneous Love. Or, in other words, we can say that Love is beyond the qualities. It is an object which is beyond the limits of the three qualities.

There is no desire at all in Love, because in the realm of Love there is no desire at all of any self-interest altogether except the one desire to see the Beloved happy. His supreme object indeed is the Beloved alone! Where there is the least desire to obtain something, there the sacred altar of Love is being blemished through vile lust; in Love, therefore, there is not an iota of desire at all.

True Love indeed does not diminish ever, rather, it is always on the increase. There is no culmination in Love at all. A lover is always feeling that he is indeed lacking in Love. In no circumstances does he feel that his Love is on the increase, his every effort, therefore, is naturally directed to develop his Love. The chain of the continuous growth of this uninterrupted Love does not break ever. This unalloyed Love continues to grow by leaps and bounds day and night.

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" Love is always on the increase just like a beautiful digit of the moon; but it has no full moon; and that is why there is no end to it. " *

Because of its having an abode in the secret recesses of the heart, this Love is more tenuous than tenuous and is merely a matter of experience only. Says loving devotee Rasakhan as if he is translating this very aphorism —

" ** Love, unalloyed and devoid of desire, is the repository of all bliss, know it as without youth, merits, beauty and wealth, without any selfishness and without any gain. It is extremely tenuous, extremely

* प्रेम सदा बढ़िबौ करै, ज्यों ससिकला सुवेष ।
वै पूनौ यामें नहीं, ताते कबहुँ न सेष ॥

** बिनु जोवन गुन रूप धन, बिनु स्वारथ हित जानि ।
सुद्ध, कामनाते रहित, प्रेम सकल रसखानि ॥
अति सूछम, कोमल अतिहि, अति पतरो, अति दूर ।
प्रेम कठिन सबते सदा, नित इकरस भरपूर ॥
रसमय स्वाभाविक, विना स्वारथ, अचल महान ।
सदा एक रस बढ़त नित सुद्ध प्रेम रसखान ॥

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tender, extremely slender and extremely remote; Love is ever the most difficult of all (to attain), it is ever uniform in bliss and filled to the brim. O Raskhan! Unalloyed Love is full of bliss, spontaneous, disinterested, unwavering, sublime, ever unvaried in sweetness and grows constantly. "

This Love is supremely blissful and uniting him with the Blissful Śrī Hari, it makes a loving devotee full of bliss.

तत्प्राप्य तदेवावलोकयति तदेव शृणोति
तदेव भाषयति* तदेव चिन्तयति ॥ ५५ ॥

55. ATTAINING THIS LOVE, A LOVING DEVOTEE SEES THIS LOVE ALONE, LISTENS TO LOVE ALONE, TALKS ABOUT LOVE ALONE AND DWELLS UPON LOVE ALONE.

A loving devotee full of this joy of Love and submerged in the divine bliss of supreme Love sees everywhere only his Beloved, full of Love and full of bliss. He does not see anything at all anywhere. It is in such circumstances that a Gopi says —

* In some texts 'तदेव भाषयति' is not found.

" * In whatever direction I see I find everything full of Śyāma.

The bowers are Śyāma, groves and the Yamuna are Śyāma, the firmament (itself) is Śyāma, and it is overcast with thick clouds which are also full of Śyāma.

All the colours are full of Śyāma, people say this is something new.

Am I mad or the dark pupils of the people themselves have changed ?

Both Chandrasāra (चन्द्रसार) and Ravisāra (रविसार) are Śyāma (personified); both musk and Cupid the conqueror are Śyāma.

*

जित देखौं तित स्याममई है ।

स्यामकुंज बन जमुना स्यामा, स्याम गगन घनघटा छई है ॥

सब रंगनमें स्याम भरो है, लोग कहत यह बात नई है ।

मैं बौरी, की लोगन ही की स्याम पुतरिया बदल गई है ॥

चंद्रसार रविसार स्याम है, मृगमद स्याम काम बिजई है ।

नीलकंठको कंठ स्याम है, मनो स्यामता बेल बई है ॥

श्रुतिको अच्छर स्याम देखियत, दीपसिखापर स्यामतई है ।

नर देवनकी कौन कथा है, अलख ब्रह्म छबि स्याममई है ॥

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The neck of Nīlakantha is Śyāma, as if the creeper of Śyāma complexion has been sown all over.

The letters of the Śrutis appear Śyāma, nay, even the lamp-flame has Śyāma's complexion. Not to talk of men and gods, even the Form of the Invisible Brahma is full of Śyāma."

Says another devotee —

" * On the roads, on the ghats,
In the lanes, in the orchards,
In the trees, in the creepers,
In the gardens, in the forests.

*

जित देखौ तित स्याममई है ।

स्यामकुंज बन जमुना स्यामा, स्याम गगन घनघटा छई है ॥
सब रंगनमें स्याम भरो है, लोग कहत यह बात नई है ।
मैं बौरी, की लोगन ही की स्याम पुतरिया बदल गई है ॥
चंद्रसार रनिसार स्याम है, मृगमद स्याम काम बिजई है ।
नीलकंठको कंठ स्याम है, मनो स्यामता बेल बई है ॥
श्रुतिको अच्छर स्याम देखियत, दीपसिद्धापर स्यामतई है ।
नर देवनकी कौन कथा है, अछल ब्रह्म छबि स्याममई है ॥

In the doorways, in the walls,
 In the thresholds and windows,
 In the diamonds, in the garlands,
 In the ornaments, in the body,
 In the groves, in the bowers,
 In the Gopīs, in the cows,
 In Gokula, in the herds of cows,
 In the lightning, in the clouds,
 In whatever direction I look,
 Śyāma alone is seen.
 Says Sāligrama — Śyāma alone
 has overspread my eyes and mind. "

" * Nothing at all about the Love of Śyāma can be uttered from the mouth. The firmament, the water, the land, the mobile and immobile creation - all these appear to be Śyāma and Śyāma alone. There is no Brahma, there is no *maya*, there is no

* कहि न जाय मुखसौं कहूँ स्याम-प्रेमकी बात ।
 नम जल थल चर अचर सब स्यामहि स्याम दिखात ॥
 ब्रह्म नहीं, माया नहीं, नहीं जीव, नहीं काल ।
 अपनीहुँ सुधि ना रही, रह्यो एक नँदलात ॥
 को कासों केहि विधि कहा, कहै हृदयकी बात ।
 हरि हेरत हिय हरि गयो हरि सर्वत्र लखात ॥

NATURE OF LOVING DEVOTION 177 AND SECONDARY DEVOTION

Jīva, there is no sense of time, no consciousness is left even of one's own self, only the Darling of Nanda is left over. Who will impart to whom — how and what — the secrets of the heart? While looking for Śrī Hari, the heart got stolen and now Hari alone is seen everywhere."

In such a state whatever sound enters his (a devotee's) ears is merely the melody indeed of the love-song of the Beloved full of love; he always remains intoxicated in the dulcet tunes of His flute. Similarly no word other than that of his Beloved escapes his lips too. He is never tired at all of singing the glories of the Beloved, in every word he continues to enjoy the incomparable relish simply of the nectar of the divine bliss of Love indeed and with unsated palate he ever remains inebriated in drinking that bliss. In his heart indeed there is no room at all left for anybody else. There exists only the complete control and undivided sovereignty solely of the Beloved. There is not the least room anywhere which can be occupied by the remembrance of somebody else's mental image even in the form of a shadow. The mind becomes visibly the very form alone of the Beloved's Love. Imagining such a state says a poet —

" The Gopī does not listen to any other name with her ears, nay, this thread (of life) is dyed in only one single hue. (She feels that) if even through a slip some other name does escape her lips, the tongue of that mouth should be tied up and dipped in the most fatal poison. Says Thakur, her feeling is this that we shall not abandon our vow in any circumstances even unconsciously. Let those reckless eyes, which look at a fair-complexioned form leaving aside Sṛī Kṛṣṇa with a swarthy complexion, be burnt." *

All the limbs feel the presence of the Beloved alone. All the senses make Him alone as their object. The eyes see the entire universe-full of Syāma day and night. The ears always listen to the extremely sweet tune of His flute composed of Nāda Brahma. The nose smells always and uninterruptedly the fragrance of that very Natwara's person. The tongue relishes uninterruptedly the nectar of that very

* कानन दूसरो नाम सुनै नहिं एकहि रंग रँगो यह डोरो ।
 धोखेहुँ दूसरो नाम कदै, रसना मुख बाँधि हलाहल बोरो ॥
 ठाकुर चित्तकी वृत्ति यहै, हम कैसेहुँ टेक तजै नहिं भोरो ।
 बावरी वेअखियाँ जरि जायँ जो साँवरो छाँड़ि निहारतिगोरो ॥

NATURE OF LOVING DEVOTION 179 AND SECONDARY DEVOTION

Love and the body feels the incomparably pleasant contact of that very Lord who is the ocean of all beauty, sweetness and bliss, who is the Lord of bliss, who is the Darling of Nanda supremely delightful to touch and the root of joy. He alone is the sound in the ether, He alone is the feeling of touch in the air, He alone is the radiance in the fire, He alone is the sense of taste in the water, and in the earth He alone exists as the feeling of smell. He alone permeates all. In all objects He alone is showing a glimpse of His unique and sweet beauty. Love and Love alone, nay, Joy and Joy alone exist everywhere. The entire universe is full of Love, full of Joy, full of Bliss or full of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Everything is full of delight, beauty and sweetness. The scene, the seer — all are sweet; we and you all too are sweet. Everything indeed of that sweet, Lord of supreme Joy and nectarian Bliss is sweet (Says a Śruti text) —

" Winds diffuse sweetness, the oceans give out sweetness, let our herbs be sweet, the very dust of the earth is full of sweetness. " *

मधु वाता ऋतायते, मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः, माध्वीनः
सन्त्वोषधीः, मधुमत् पार्थिव रजः ॥ (यजुर्वेद १३.२७, २८)

Sweetness and sweetness alone exists everywhere. In this way, the Lord full of Love exists everywhere in the eyes of a loving devotee and a devotee in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord has indeed said —

" He who sees Me (the Universal Self) present in all beings, and all being existing within Me, never loses sight of Me, and I never lose sight of him." * (*Gītā*, VI. 30)

In this state the eternal and vast ocean of Divine bliss of nectarean Love in which a devotee remains submerged is ineffable altogether. This alone is the nature of loving devotion or transcendental devotion. This alone is a high state of Infinite Bliss; pointing out the difference between this very All-pervading Infinite Bliss and trifling happiness, says a Śruti text —

" Where one does not see another, does not listen to another, does not know another, that alone is Bhūmā (Infinite). And where one sees another, listens to another, knows

* यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

(गीता ६.३०)

another, that is finite. What Bhūmā (Infinite) is, is nectar, and what is finite, is dead." * (Chhāndogyaopaniṣad VII.xxiv.1)

It is for this reason that Love is always sweet, imperishable, eternal and true.

गौणी त्रिधा गुणभेदादार्तोदिभेदाद्वा ॥ ५६ ॥

56. SECONDARY DEVOTION IS OF THREE KINDS ACCORDING TO GUṆAS OR ACCORDING TO THE AFFLICTED PERSONS ETC.

Upto the last aphorism that transcendental or primary devotion in which a loving devotee attains through loving devotion his Beloved Lord in the form of Love was discussed. In the Śrīmad Bhāgavata, this very devotion is called disinterested (अहैतुकी) or devoid of qualities (निर्गुण) and in the Gītā it is called the devotion of a jñānī (enlightened person). In disinterested devotion the tendencies of a devotee's mind and

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यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति
स भूमाय यत्रान्यत्पश्यत्यन्यच्छृणोत्यन्यद्विजानाति
तदल्पम् यो वै भूमा तदमृतमथ यदल्पं तन्मर्त्यम् ।

(छा. उ. ७.२४.१)

the current of his activities continue to flow towards the Lord uninterruptedly and naturally indeed, in other words his mind is incessantly engrossed in the Lord with the sentiment of desireless and exclusive love and all his actions are performed for the sake of God alone (The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, III.xxix.11-12). And the enlightened devotee, difficult to find, mentioned in the *Gītā* also sees every object as Vāsudeva (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) alone (VII.19). Both these indeed are the very personifications of the Lord alone. Secondary devotion, a devotion of a lower class as compared with the above devotion, is now being described here. This secondary devotion is of three kinds according to three *gunas* — Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas or the three type of devotees, the afflicted, the seeker of knowledge and the seeker of riches.

That devotion, which is undertaken with the object of destroying sins in the form of surrendering the fruit of all actions to the Lord or in which worship is performed as a duty; taking this into account and maintaining a distinction between the worshipper and the worshipped, is sattwic in nature (The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, III.xxix.10).

That devotion, which is undertaken with the object of attaining worldly enjoyments, fame and sovereignty, in the form of idol-worship only, maintaining a distinction between the worshipper and the worshipped, is rajasic in nature, (The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* III.xxix.9).

That devotion, which is actuated by anger, violence, hypocrisy and envy, maintaining a distinction between the worshipper and the worshipped, is tamasic in nature (The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* III.xxix.8).

Similarly the afflicted, the seekers of knowledge and the seekers of worldly riches practise three kinds of devotion through three types of worship; in other words, secondary devotion is of three kinds according to the difference in the sentiment of the devotees.

Although the means adopted in secondary devotion do not result directly in God-realization, yet even the *Sādhakas* of secondary devotion are virtuous indeed, and they too, practising this devotion continuously, attain ultimately the devotion which is the chief means to God-realization or loving devotion in the form of the Lord Himself. In the devotion to the Lord this alone is a speciality that its ultimate result is the attainment of Divine Love, so difficult to achieve. This is why even the secondary devotion has been recognized as of a high order and worthy of being practised by pious persons alone. Because in any form of devotion indeed, there exists in some form or other remembrance of the Lord, dependence on the Lord and contemplation of the Lord and the result of God-remembrance, dependence on

the Lord and contemplation of God is direct God-realization indeed. Therefore, every man should certainly practise devotion indeed in any manner whatsoever. But as far as possible, sattwic devotion or disinterested devotion with the sentiment of a true seeker of riches should be practised, accounting as harmful even the grandeur of the three worlds and accounting the Lord alone as the supreme object, the supreme treasure, in order to attain His Love alone.

उत्तरस्मादुत्तरस्मात्पूर्वपूर्वा श्रेयाय भवति ॥५७॥

57. (AMONG THESE) THE THREE TYPES OF DEVOTION (MENTIONED ABOVE) ARE MORE AND MORE BENEFICIAL IN THE REVERSE SEQUENCE.

The rajasic type of devotion is better than the tamasic one and the sattwic one better than the rajasic one. Similarly the devotion of a seeker of knowledge is better than that of a devotee seeking riches and the devotion of an afflicted devotee is particularly beneficial as compared with both of them.

§§

FEASIBILITY AND SUPERIORITY OF DEVOTION

अन्यस्मात् सौलभ्यं भक्तौ ॥५८॥

58. DEVOTION IS THE MOST FEASIBLE *OF ALL OTHER PRACTICES.

Prior to this the glory of devotion and its superiority as compared with the paths of Karma, Yoga and Jñāna have been described. Now the author is stating that in spite of its being superior to all other paths, the attainment of devotion is more natural and feasible as compared with all other achievements. In the attainment of devotion, neither learning is necessary nor wealth, nor is high family a requisite; nor a higher social order (Varṇāśrama), nor a study of the Vedas is necessary; neither austere penance nor is a sense of discrimination necessary nor severe dispassion. What is necessary is simply to remember the Lord lovingly and constantly having faith in the unlimited grace of the Lord with utter simplicity. Feasibility then becomes evident indeed. The Lord's grace is being showered on all ever and always. Man does not have faith, that is why he is deprived of it. In the *Gītā* V.29 the Lord has proclaimed publicly that —

" I am the disinterested Friend of all living beings and he who comes to know Me as such attains peace that very moment. " *

Reposing faith in the Lord's grace man should accept that he is being submerged in the ocean of His grace. Above and below me all round me and in the past and future - in all places and at all times the Lord's grace exists in full abundance. No sooner this is accepted than does he become eligible for the Lord's devotion by getting immediately rid of all sins and afflictions through the glory of that grace of the Lord. Reposing faith in the Lord's grace in this manner and making up his mind, anybody indeed can practise exclusive remembrance of the Lord in any circumstances whatsoever, whether one is a child, an old man, a youth, a woman, a man, brahmin or a Sūdra. In this one has neither to renounce anything nor to adopt anything. In spite of the Divine grace being ever showered on all - the faith that we lack in this - it is just that faith which has to be made steady. All the means to attain devotion then will by themselves become

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सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥

(गीता ५.२६)

easily successful indeed. (The *Gītā* VIII.14 *
 O Arjuna, I am easy of attainment by him.)
 Devotion cannot be attained by any other means,
 nay, it is attained only through the adoration
 of the Lord.

प्रमाणान्तरस्यानपेक्षत्वात् स्वयंप्रमाणत्वात् ॥५६॥

59. AS DEVOTION ITSELF IS A TESTIMONY,
 IT NEEDS NO OTHER TESTIMONY.

Aspirants treading the path of devotion
 go on getting the testimony of devotional
 happiness by itself. They themselves continue
 to feel it, no other testimony is necessary in
 this. On becoming a wife alone can one
 experience conjugal felicity, it is not a matter
 which a virgin girl can be made to understand.
 Even so the devotees alone experience devotional
 happiness, it is not a matter to be explained in
 words. Those illustrious saints alone, who
 constantly remember the Lord with a mind
 thrilled with joy and love, renouncing all
 desires and taking the shelter of Divine grace
 with the sole desire of attaining Divine Love,
 experience devotional happiness.

* अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
 तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥

(गीता ८.१४)

शान्तिरूपात्परमानन्दरूपाच्च ॥६०॥

60. DEVOTION HAS THE NATURE OF PEACE AND SUPREME BLISS.

Peace and Supreme Bliss are the direct embodiments of the Lord (as it were). The Lord Himself descends in the form of His Love, that is why the Divine Love too is in the form of Peace and Supreme Bliss indeed. The Blissful Lord manifests Himself in the form of Love and Lover by making His Ānanda-Śakti called Hlādinī (Enrapturing Energy) as the cause and manifesting Himself as the Beloved, He enjoys His own Bliss Himself. This alone is His blissful pastime (Ānanda-Līlā). It should be borne in mind here that the Lord, whose devotion or Love is of the nature of Peace and Supreme Bliss is not Saguṇa (with attributes) Brahma endowed with the three Guṇas, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas born of Prakṛti as accepted by the followers of Nirguṇa school. The Divine body of the Lord is ever manifest indeed through His Yoga-māyā, a Portion of His own Bliss. It is for this reason that sages revelling in their own selves (Ātmārāma), *jīvanmukta* (liberated in this very life) exalted persons and Mahatmas like Vyāsa, Nārada, Sukdeva, Janaka, Sanaka etc. get fascinated by each one of His Divine qualities, Divine ornaments, Divine fragrance, Divine melody of the flute and Divine

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beauty. Had only the qualities of the filthy *maya*, giving birth to this material world and throwing a veil in between manifested in the Lord or had His body been composed of this very *maya*, in that case the Mahatmas who are the embodiments of Brahma and who have cut asunder the knots of *maya*, would never have been attracted towards Him to this extent. That very Bhagavān whom the followers of Nirguṇa school call (pure *Sachchidānanda Ghana* (Consciousness, Knowledge and Bliss concretized) Brahma - and whom the Vedas try to indicate by saying *Neti, Neti* (Not this, Not this) — that very Lord beyond *maya* and who is *Vijñānānanda Ghana* (concretized Bliss of Knowledge) *Parmātamā* is the Beloved of the devotees. Even to call Him an ocean of Peace and Bliss does not describe Him as really as He is. It is His Love alone which is Supreme Peace and the embodiment of Supreme Bliss. It is this very Love which Devarṣi Nārada is narrating in this aphorism.

§§§

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN DEVOTION AND IMPEDIMENTS IN IT

लोकहानौ चिन्ता न कार्या निवेदितात्मलोकवेदत्वात्* ॥६१॥

61. A DEVOTEE SHOULD NOT WORRY ABOUT WORLDLY LOSSES AS HE HAS SURRENDERED HIMSELF, HIS TEMPORAL AND VEDIC ACTIVITIES (ALL THESE) TO THE LORD.

As a devotee has surrendered his all to the Lord, what need has he then to have any worry about them? He should worry only about the contemplation of his Beloved Lord alone. Whether the objects like the wife, son, wealth, followers and honour etc. remain intact or vanish altogether, he should have no anxiety about them; because he has become a destitute altogether by surrendering them to the Lord already. Moreover where has he got the time and the contemplating mind to worry about them? His mind indeed has already been stolen by the sole contemplation of the wish-yielding gem (Lord Śrī Hari) which robs all anxieties. That clever Crest-jewel among

* Some read it as 'लोकवेदशीलत्वात्'

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN DEVOTION 191 AND IMPEDIMENTS IN IT

stealers does not ever wish to return at all his mind to him, how then is he to worry at all about any loss, lacking his mind as he does ? Therefore, an aspirant treading this path should not worry at all about the worldly losses. He ought indeed to contemplate on the Lord alone - the essence of all objects. And in the heart of a devotee such a thing does indeed happen.

न तदसिद्धौ* लोकव्यवहारो हेयः किन्तु
फलत्यागस्तत्साधनं च कार्यमेव ॥ ६२ ॥

62. (BUT) SO LONG AS SUCCESS IS NOT ATTAINED IN DEVOTION, WORLDLY ACTIVITIES SHOULD NOT BE RENOUNCED, BUT RENOUNCING THE FRUIT (IN A DISINTERESTED MANNER) THAT DEVOTION SHOULD BE PRACTISED.

On attaining Love worldly (and Vedic) activities are got rid off, one does not have to renounce their performance deliberately. Surrender means their surrender by the mind only. Later when a high stage of Love is attained, all these activities themselves then release their hold by ridding the devotee of the

* Some read it as 'तत्सिद्धौ'

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scriptural bondage because of his having gone beyond the positive and negative imperatives. This is indeed inevitable in that state; but he, who deliberately abandons the scriptural laws under the pretence of love, cannot attain devotional success easily. This is why says the author, 'do not abandon worldly activities deliberately, go on performing your duties (only) abandoning the desire for the fruit.' He, who acts without any motive, gets released automatically from the anxiety of worldly losses and those worldly activities of his, which have been performed with the object of attaining Divine Love but without any motive, become instrumental in the attainment of devotion.

स्त्रीधननास्तिकवैरिचरित्रं* न श्रवणीयम् ॥६३॥

63. TALKS ABOUT WOMEN, WEALTH, ATHEISTS AND ENEMIES SHOULD NOT BE LISTENED TO.

In aphorism No. 62 it has been enjoined that worldly activities should not be renounced, worldly activities indeed should therefore be performed but an aspirant treading the path of Love should certainly eschew talks about women,

* Some read it as 'स्त्रीधननास्तिकचरित्रम्'

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN DEVOTION 193 AND IMPEDIMENTS IN IT

wealth, atheists and enemies even in worldly activities.

(1) He, whose mind has become absorbed in dwelling upon women, cannot dwell upon the Lord in any way whatsoever. By reflecting upon women passion is aroused and passion is the greatest impediment in the path of Love. Merely listening to, reading and seeing descriptions connected with women lead to dwelling upon women. An aspirant ought not, therefore, to talk about women, should not listen to talks about women and their songs, should not see pictures relating to women, should not read books and other literature about women, should not see such dramas and films etc., should not discuss about female character at all, should not write articles etc. relating to women, should not live among women and should not unnecessarily mix with women. Those aspirants who are householders should avoid as far as possible mixing with other women except their own wives. To talk about women and to listen to such talks and to see pictures of women are indeed harmful to all. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, it is said --

" The infatuation and bondage which accrue to a man from attachment to any other object are not so complete as those resulting from attachment to women and from the

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fellowship of men fond of women." *

(Bha. III.xxxi.35)

Further on, in Book V, association with men attached to women has been described as the 'gate to hell'. Just as mixing with women is to be abandoned by men, even so contact with men is to be relinquished altogether by women too.

(2) Musing on wealth awakens greed. When greed for riches is aroused in the mind, then and there the sense of discriminating between the right and the wrong is destroyed and abandoning the right path man begins to tread the path of injustice. One should not, therefore, look at or listen to the boastful talks about the affluence and enjoyments of the rich people.

(3) They alone, who do not believe in God and the scriptures, are atheists. There is hardly any enemy of the living beings in the world like atheists who do not believe in the existence of God. 'What is there in this? What is there in that? God is simply a sham, who

* न तथास्य भवेन्मोहो बन्धश्चान्यप्रसङ्गतः ।
योषित्सङ्गाद्यथा पुंसो यथा तत्सङ्गिसङ्गतः ॥

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has seen God ? The soul is merely a fiction.' Disbelief in God is awakened by associating with sophists who talk such nonsense and revile God and the scriptures and by listening to their stories, and there is no other means at all of a downfall like disbelief in God. Therefore, one should always avoid atheists.

(4) In fact, a devotee has no inimical feeling in his mind towards anybody at all. How can he, who sees the entire universe permeated by the Lord, the Delighter of his soul, who sees the universe filled with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, consider anybody his enemy ? The Lord of gods Śrī Mahādevajī has said --

" Umā, (continues, Lord Śāṅkara,) they who are devoted to Śrī Rāma's feet and are free from lust, vanity and anger look upon the whole world as full of their Lord; against whom can they harbour animosity ? " *

(Ra. ca. ma. VII.112)

उमा जे राम चरन रत बिगत काम मद क्रोध ।
निज प्रभुमय देखहि जगत केहि सन करहि बिरोध ॥

(रा.च.मा. ७.११२)

But so long as devotion is not accomplished, till then an aspirant should feel, nay, he should determine mentally that everything is the embodiment of his Lord alone. In such circumstances if any other person bears malice or enmity towards an aspirant through misapprehension, he should not listen at all to those inimical talks of his as far as possible. Because by listening to them there is a possibility of anger being aroused. Therefore, for his part, the aspirant should not regard anybody as his enemy indeed except his untamed mind, but if any one does bear enmity towards him, he should not care about it at all.

Thought of women excites passion, thought of wealth leads to greed, thought of atheists awakens disbelief in the Lord and thought of an enemy provokes anger. As far as practicable, one should not, therefore, listen to the stories of all these four.

अभिमानदम्भादिकं त्याज्यम् ॥६४॥

64. PRIDE AND HYPOCRISY ETC. SHOULD BE RENOUNCED.

In the preceding aphorism, it has been enjoined that one should not listen to talks about women, wealth, atheists and an enemy. But in doing so an aspirant should not have the

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feeling that he has renounced women and wealth, he is a supreme believer in God and he has no enemies. To all intents pride is the cause of a downfall. An aspirant should not feel proud of anything at all — like property, progeny, power, health, learning, intelligence, family, caste, stage in life (Āśrama), conduct, beauty, status and personal effort etc. Whatever good things or good qualities an aspirant may attain or his spiritual endeavour continues to progress satisfactorily, he should then consider God's grace alone as the cause of all this. Pride is extremely harmful, it should, therefore, be abandoned altogether. So much so that even the pride of being prideless should be given up. An excellent remedy for rooting out pride is the cultivation of utter helplessness, humility and modesty. Even the devotion involving prostration destroys pride. Similarly, hypocrisy too should be renounced. Hypocrisy consists in trying to display those qualities which one does not possess, either for the sake of wealth and honour or through force of habit and pretending to be a religious person, a devotee or a renunciant. A hypocrite's path of spiritual endeavour gets blocked very badly. He exhausts all his learning, intelligence and dexterity in maintaining his false appearance outwardly. Pridelessness and simplicity are supremely helpful in the path of devotion whereas pride and hypocrisy are very great impediments. Both

these are vices of demoniacal properties. By adding the word 'etc.' to these, the author has hinted at the other vices of demoniacal properties*. All the demoniacal vices should, therefore, be renounced.

* In Chapter XVI, verses 7-20 of the *Śrīmad-Bhagvatagītā*, the Lord has described demoniacal properties. A translation of these verses is given below :-

" Men possessing a demoniac disposition know not what is right activity and what is right abstinence from activity. Hence they possess neither purity (external or internal) nor good conduct nor even truthfulness. (7)

Men possessing a demoniac disposition say this world is without any foundation, absolutely unreal and godless, brought forth by mutual union of the male and female and hence conceived in lust; what else than this ? (8)

Clinging to this false view these slow-witted men of a vile disposition and terrible deeds, these enemies of mankind, prove equal only to the destruction of the universe. (9)

(contd.)

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तदर्पिताखिलाचारः सन् कामक्रोधाभिमानादिकं
तस्मिन्नेव करणीयम् ॥६५॥

65. AFTER HAVING SURRENDERED ALL ESTABLISHED USAGES TO THE LORD, IF PASSION, ANGER AND PRIDE ETC. STILL EXIST, THEY TOO THEN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARDS HIM ALONE.

When everything has been surrendered to God, to whom else then will passion, anger etc.

Cherishing insatiable desires and embracing false doctrines through ignorance, these men of impure conduct move in this world, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. (10)

Giving themselves up to innumerable cares ending only with death, they remain devoted to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures and are positive in their belief that this is the highest limit of joy. (11)

Held in bondage by hundreds of ties of expectation and wholly giving themselves up to lust and anger, they strive to amass

(contd.)

be surrendered ? As the Beloved Lord is the object of His loving devotee's love, even so He

by unfair means hoards of money and other objects for the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures. (12)

They say to themselves, 'This much has been secured by me today and now I shall realize this ambition. So much wealth is already with me and yet again this shall be mine. (13)

That enemy has been slain by me and I shall kill those others too. I am the Lord of all, the enjoyer of all power, I am endowed with all supernatural powers, and am mighty and happy. (14)

I am wealthy and own a large family, who else is like unto me ? I will sacrifice to gods, will give alms, I will make merry.' Thus blinded by ignorance, enveloped in the mesh of delusion and addicted to the enjoyment of the sensuous pleasures, their mind bewildered by numerous thoughts, these men of a devilish disposition fall into the foulest hell. (15, 16)

(contd.)

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alone is the object too of his passion and anger etc. Since nobody else exists in his mind, who else then can be their object? This does never mean that even the loving devotees of the Lord have the same type of passion, anger and pride (in them) as that of amorous persons. The renunciation of the evils, passion, anger and pride etc. relating to demoniacal properties has already been narrated earlier; how then can such defiled passion exist in the high-souled loving devotees? Where can the attachment to

Intoxicated by wealth and honour, those self-conceited and haughty men worship God through nominal sacrifices for ostentation without following the sacred rituals. (17)

Given over to egotism, brute force, arrogance, lust and anger etc. and calumnizing others, they hate Me (the inner Controller of all) dwelling in their own bodies as well as in those of others. (18)

These haters, sinful, cruel and vilest among men, I cast again and again into demoniacal wombs in this world. (19)

Failing to reach Me, Arjuna, these stupid souls are born life after life in demoniac wombs and then verily sink down to a still lower plane. " (20)

worldly enjoyments, violence, malice and anger find room in them? In those prideless ones, how can even the odour of pride be there? Not even their germ exists in them, when there is no desire at all for their own happiness, whence can these evils come in them? The sole object of the life of those devotees is to make the Beloved happy - 'the purport of the highest Gopī-bhāva is to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa happy'. In their mind there is not the least impression at all of the world. Having forgotten the remembrance of all these - shame, hatred, family, modesty, honour, body, house, sense-enjoyments and liberation, they stand offered to their Beloved Lord alone. Therefore, just as the devotees themselves possess divine sentiments, even so their passion, anger, and pride too are divine in nature. It is for this reason that supremely dispassionate and liberated sages have considered themselves as accomplished of purpose by listening to and singing such pastimes of this type of devotees dyed in the Love of God. Those devotees whose mind has turned away from all sides and the Lord alone is left as the object of their sole desire shout out weeping continuously by feeling agonized with the intensity of the desire to have a vision of that Lord of theirs — 'O Lord ! O Beloved, O the sole friend of the universe ! O Drawer of our minds forcibly towards Himself ! O Nimble One ! O Sole ocean of compassion ! O Protector ! O Amorous lover !

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O One lovely to behold ! Ah ! Alas ! When will
You come within the range of our sight ? * *

(Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Karṇāmṛita)

Says Śrī Rukminījī, whose life-breath was
united with Śrī Kṛṣṇa —

" Having heard, O immortal Lord, most
handsome in all the (three) worlds, of Your
excellences - which, entering deep into the
heart through the apertures of the ears,
dispel the agony of the hearts, O beloved
one, - as well as of Your charming
appearance, which vouchsafes to those that
have eyes all the blessings sought for by
their eyes, my mind has been set on You,
(all) shame having fled away from it. What
noble, firm and high-born maiden, O Bestower
of Liberation, will, not on her coming to
age elect You as her husband - You, O Lion
among men, who are Your own compeer in
point of pedigree, good disposition,
comeliness of form, learning, youthfulness,

* हे देव हे दयित हे भुवनैकबन्धो
हे कृष्ण हे चपल हे करुणैकसिन्धो ।
हे नाथ हे रमण हे नयनामिराम
हा हा कदा नु भवितासि पदं दृशोर्मे ॥

(श्रीकृष्णकणामृत ४०)

opulence and glory and ravish the mind of (all) mankind ? * (Bha. X.Lii.37, 38)

" If (however) I do not secure Your grace, O lotus-eyed Lord, - a bath in the dust, of whose lotus feet great souls like Lord Siva (the Spouse of Umā) seek to obtain for dispelling their darkness (of ignorance), - I shall lay down my life, (already) withered through fasting, (each time I am reborn) in the hope that the grace may be secured (even) through (say) a hundred births. " ** (Bha. X.Lii.43)

* श्रुत्वा गुणान् भुवनसुन्दर शृण्वतां ते
निर्विद्वद्य कर्णविवरैर्हरतोऽङ्गतापम् ।
रूपं दशां दशिमतामखिलार्थलाभं
त्वय्यच्युताविशति चित्तमपत्रपं मे ॥
का त्वा मुकुन्द महती कुलशीलरूप-
विद्यावयोद्रविणधामभिरात्मतुल्यम् ।
धीरा पतिं कुलवती न वृणीत कन्या
काले नृसिंह नरलोकमनोऽभिरामम् ॥

(भा० १०.५२.३७, ३८)

** यस्याङ्घ्रिपङ्कजरजःस्नपनं महान्तो
वाञ्छन्त्युमापतिरिवात्मतमोऽपहत्यै ।
यर्हाम्बुजाक्ष न लभेय भवत्प्रसादं
जह्यामसून् व्रतकृशाञ्छतजन्मभिः स्यात् ॥

(भा० १०.५२.४३)

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN DEVOTION 205 AND IMPEDIMENTS IN IT

The Queen Consorts of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa say to Draupadī —

" O virtuous lady, we crave not for universal sovereignty on earth, or for rulership of the heaven, for the enjoyments attaching to both these positions or for supernatural powers, for the position of Brahmā, or for Liberation, or for (the various forms of personal existence in) the (eternal) abode of God. We (only) desire that we may (continue to) bear on our head the glorious dust of the lotus feet of our Lord, which is scented with the saffron on the bosom of Lakṣmī (the goddess of wealth). " *

(Bha. X.Lxxxiii.41, 42)

Liberation indeed remains rolling at the feet of such devotees.

*
न वयं साध्वि साम्राज्यं स्वाराज्यं भोज्यमप्युत ।
वैराज्यं पारमेष्ठ्यं च आनन्त्यं वा हरेः पदम् ॥
कामयामह एतस्य श्रीमत्पादरजः श्रियः ।
कुचकुङ्कुमगन्धाढ्यं मूर्ध्ना वोढुं गदाभृतः ॥

(५१० १०.८३.४१, ४२)

" At the feet of him, who has devotion in the form of Supreme Bliss for the feet of Śrī Mukunda (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) rolls the entire affluence of the realm of liberation" *

The Gopīs, the crest-jewels among devotees and full of ideal love while bewailing over the disappearance of their Beloved Lord from their midst, say —

" Place on our head, O beloved Lord, Your lotus-like palm, that has vouchsafed protection, O Chief of the Vṛṣṇis, to those that have sought Your feet from fear of transmigration, (nay,) which grants (all) desires and has clasped the hand of Śrī (as a part of the marriage ceremony). O Alleviator of the suffering of the people of Vraja, O gallant Lord, whose (very) smile crushes the pride (born of unrequited love) of Your own people, accept (in Your service), O Friend, us, Your (avowed) servants and reveal to us (poor women) Your charming lotus-like countenance.

O Delighter of souls, (pray) set on our bosom, O Reliever of agony, Your most

* यदि भवति मुकुन्दे भक्तिरानन्दसान्द्रा
विलुठति चरणाग्रे मोक्षसाम्राज्यलक्ष्मीः ॥

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blissful lotus-like feet, which grant the desires of those that bow low to them, and are worshipped by Brahmā (the lotus-born), which are the ornament of the earth and are worth contemplating upon in (times of) adversity." * (Bha. X.xxxi.5, 6, 13)

Thus it is that loving devotees agonized with passionate love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa always weep

*
विरचिताभयं वृष्णिभुर्य ते
चरणमीयुषां संसृतेर्भयात् ।
करसरोरुहं कान्त कामद
शिरसि धेहि नः श्रीकरग्रहम् ॥
व्रजजनार्तिहन् वीर योषितां
निजजनस्मयध्वंसनस्मित ।
भज सखे भवतिकङ्करीः स्म नो
जलरुहाननं चारु दर्शय ॥
प्रणतकामदं पद्मजार्चितं
धरणिमण्डनं ध्येयमापदि ।
चरणपङ्कजं शन्तमं च ते
रमण नः स्तनेष्वर्पयाधिहन् ॥

(भट्ट १०.३१.५, ६, १३)

for Him alone and call on Him alone; and when the sportive Lord, enacting the pastime of hide-and-seek as it were and listening to their call of love, scatters all round the blissful sweetness of His loving delight by appearing suddenly filling in the flute the divine and enchanting melody and smiling gently in a Form which is desired by the three worlds, difficult to attain even by yogis, hoped for by the god of gods, attracting to the hearts of R̥sis, Mahar̥sis and Mahāpuruṣas, the quintessence of all beauty, sweetness and nectarian bliss, the root of happiness, fascinating to the god of love and which churns the mind of Cupid and when He sheds in all directions the shining radiance of His moon-like countenance, cool like the nectar of loveliness and sweetness, what then becomes the condition of the mind of those fortunate high-souled devotees endowed with divine eyes and divine sentiments, nobody at all has the power to describe. This is a mystery which cannot be put into words.

At that time everything that a devotee calls his own gets dedicated automatically at His feet and getting intoxicated in the exuberance of joy he cries out defying the entire world —

" I can renounce my home, renounce the forest, renounce the town and its citizens, renounce the bank of Bansibāt. I shall not feel ashamed of anybody at all. a/

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I can renounce my body, renounce the abode, but tell me how I can renounce my affection (towards the Darling of Nanda); at the present stage I am prepared to don any robes even forsaking royal obligations.

The world has gone mad; but mad they call me; I shall not prevent anybody from calling me mad. I care not for remonstrators and listeners, nor do I care even for my father and brother; by God, I can even renounce my mother, but I will renounce not Kanhaiyā (Sri Kṛṣṇa). " *

I shall live and die simply for Your sake and that too at Your feet alone. This is the sole desire of my heart. When everything has been sacrificed then even after death, these five elements of the body will render service to You alone after getting scattered separately.

*

घर तजौं, वन तजौं, नागर नगर तजौं,
वंसीवट-तट तजौं काहूपै न लजिहौं ।
देह तजौं, गेह तजौं, नेह कहो कैसे तजौं,
आज राजकाज सब ऐसे साज सजिहौं ॥
बावरो भयो है लोक बावरी कहत मोकों,
बावरी कहेते मैं काहू ना बरजिहौं ।
कहैया सुनैया तजौं, बाप और भैया तजौं,
देया तजौं भैया ! पै कन्हैया नाहिं तजिहौं ॥

When these five elements get separated from me I fear they may not swerve from the service of the Beloved; it is for this reason alone that a devotee prays to the Creator with an agonized heart —

" The five elements will indeed get separated without any doubt; however, O God ! I pray that You only do this much - the water-element should get mixed with the water of that well the water of which my Beloved may be using for bathing and drinking; the fire-element in the mirror in which the Beloved sees His face, the earth-element in that path which the Beloved uses for His walks to and fro, the air-element with that fortunate fan which the Beloved uses for fanning Himself, and the ether-element with the ether of that court-yard which the Beloved uses for sitting." *

Translating this very idea, a poet has said — §

' Afraid of death I am not, it is indeed dependent on destiny. (My sole desire is just this much) - that the five elements of

* पञ्चत्वं तनुरेतु भूतनिवहाः स्वांशे विशन्तु स्फुटं
धातारं प्रणिपत्य हन्त शिरसा तत्रापि याचे वरम् ।
तद्वापीषु पयस्तदीयमुकुरे ज्योतिस्तदीयाङ्गन-
व्योम्नि व्योम तदीयवर्त्मनि धरा तत्तालवृन्तेऽनिलः ॥

§ परिबे ढरौ न बिधिहिं बस, पंचभूत करि बास ।
पी-बापी, मारग, मुकुर, बीजन, अंगन-अकास ।।

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mine - (my body) - may get merged in my Beloved's Vāpi (a well or a reservoir of water which has to be approached for fetching water by a flight of steps), the road used by Him, the mirror used by Him, the fan used by Him and the ether of His court-yard. '

And what about the Jīva ? It can never be separate at all from the blessed feet of the Lord. He will indeed hide it in His own heart ! This is just an insignificant illustration of the passion' of devotees ! Now look at their 'anger' !

Once Śrī Rādhā got angry at some provoking pranks of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; a Sakhī (female companion) began to pacify Her, thereupon full of anger She burst out — 'Don't you even mention His name in My presence; not to speak of Him, I shall renounce altogether everything with a dark hue. I shall rather suffer from the pangs of separation from Him throughout My life, but meet Him I will never. '

' I shall not meet Him even by inadvertance, so long as I live; I shall rather suffer the pangs of separation, nay, even get consumed by its fire. I have now resolved in My mind that in order to drink water I shall not even tread the path used by Him. I shall never apply collyrium to My eyes, nor apply musk to My body even accidentally. I shall not listen to the buzzing of a big black bee or the cooing of a cuckoo with my ears; I shall not touch a

blue lotus with my hands.' *

Just behold with a bit of attention, how much of delight is filled in this 'anger'.

In order to enjoy the delight of the feigned anger of His devoted playmates, the playful Lord once provoked them by playing a foul game. The playmates jointly decided to remove this Naughty one from the game. Not one of them, however, was ready to bear the separation of Syāma Sundara (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) even for a moment; because no sooner He is separated than does their life-breath get separated, but making an external pretence they said — 'O Kṛṣṇa ! You Yourself commit a foul and then become arrogantly offended; begone hence, we shall not let You play with us.' Well, the moment He got the scolding, Syāma Sundara, the Treasure of their life got softened. He knelt down at their feet and began asking to be excused swearing not to repeat it. Surdasji has sung —

* मिलौं न तिनसौं भूल, अब जौलौं जीवन जियौं ।
 सहौं बिरहको सूल, बर ताकी ज्वाला जरौं ॥
 मैं अब अपने मन यह ठानी । उनके पंथ पिऊँ नहिं पानी ॥
 कबहूँ नैन न अंजन लाऊँ । मृगमद भूकि न अंग चढ़ाऊँ ॥
 सुनौं न स्रवननि अलि धिक बानी । नील जलज परसौं नहिं पानी ॥

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN DEVOTION 213 AND IMPEDIMENTS IN IT

While playing games who is whose master ? Hari (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) has lost and Śrīdāma has won, why then do you unnecessarily become annoyed ? Neither are You superior to us in caste or rank, nor do we live under Your shelter, You are simply showing Your superior authority because You own more cows. Who is going to play with him who gets offended (so easily) ? He then begins to supplicate and kneels down at their feet. Says Surdas that the Lord did indeed want to play, so He paid the wager swearing by Nanda (His father). ' *

This is their anger ! Now remains the question of pride, and that pride free of evils is indeed an embellishment, of this loving devotion. On one occasion Śrī Rādhārānī got indignant and said to Her Sakhīs —

* खेलनमें को काको गुसैयाँ ।

हरि हारे जीते श्रीदामा, बरबस ही कत करत हसैयाँ ॥
जाति पाँति हमते बड़ नाहीं, ना हम बसत तुम्हारी छैयाँ ।
अति अधिकार जनावत ताते, जाते अधिक तुम्हारे गैयाँ ॥
रूठ करे ता सँग को खेलै, हा हा खात परत तब पैयाँ ।
'सुरदास' प्रभु खेल्यो ही चाहैं, दौब दियो करि नंद दुहैयाँ ॥

' O Sakhī, let not the Darling of Nanda (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) be admitted inside, Let Him not keep His foot inside, howsoever He may allure you. O friend, how can such people who talk with duplicity be trusted? Says Nārāyaṇa leaving aside My mansion He may go anywhere He pleases.' *

While trying repeatedly to conciliate Her, the Lord got tired and at last said --

' Listen, O Rādhikā ! The amount of strain which this pride of Yours has imposed upon Me, was not even felt by Me when as Dharnīdhara (an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu as Varāha - the Divine Boar) I retrieved the earth and in My incarnation as Matsya (Divine Fish) I rescued the Vedas of Brahmā, when I killed an enemy like Madhu (a demon), when I (in My incarnation as Paśūrāma) vested kingship in the brahmins, removed unbearable hardships and (in My incarnation as Vāmana) seized the kingdom of Bali; when I (as Rāma) broke the bow, took a wife unto Myself and conquered the

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सखि नँदलाल न आवन पावै ।

भीतर चरन धरन जिन दीजो, चाहे जिते ललचावै ॥

ऐसनको बिस्वास कहा री कपट बैन बतियावै ।

‘नारायन’ इक मेरे भवन तजि अनत चहे जहँ जावै ॥

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invincible Rāvaṇa; when I (as Kṛṣṇa) killed demons - Agha, Vaka, Vatsa, Ariṣṭa and Keśi and swallowed the forest conflagration, when I (as Mohinī) assumed the form of a woman and fascinated both gods and demons, who is there in the world on whom I did not shower My Grace. When I searched the ocean in order to restore life to the dead son of My preceptor, I know not what there is in this bliss that it becomes easily fresh and fresh, says 'Sūraśyāma' in My efforts to conciliate You I have forgotten all My prowess.' *

* इतो श्रम नाहिन तबहुँ भयो ।

सुनु राधिका ! जितो श्रम मोकौँ ते यह मानु दयो ॥
धरनीधर बिधि बेद उधारो, मधु सो सत्रु हयो ।
द्विज नृप किये दुसह दुख मेटे, बलिको राज लयो ॥
तोरयो धनुष सुयंबर कीनो, रावन अजित जयो ।
अघ बक बच्छ अरिष्ट केसि मथि दावानल अँचयो ॥
तिय बपु धरयो असुर सुर मोहे, को जग जो न द्रयो ।
गुहसुत मृतक ज्यायबे कारन सागर सोध लयो ॥
जानौँ नाहिं कहा या रसमें सहजहि होत नयो ।
'सूरस्याम' बल तोहि मनावत मोहि सब बिसरि गयो ॥

'Blessed is Thy pride ! I performed many strenuous deeds; never did i accept defeat, never did I feel fatigue. Today in conciliating You all My prowess has vanished.' This is an example of a Love-pastime between the Lord and the devotees - in this pastime attachment, passion, anger and pride - all these are there; but all of them are in a different form. All of them are merely aliases of pure Love, the renunciation of all the duties indeed in this case is the supreme duty. Indeed going against the code in this case is the highest code of Love.

This has, however, a reference to God-realized devotees. If even during the course of one's devotional Sādhana, passion, anger and greed ever trouble one they too then should be directed towards God alone. The things which become impediments in our way, become helpful instruments on being directed towards God. This should be borne in mind as a certainty.

'In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata*, X.xxix.15, *Śrī Sukadevajī*, the best of Paramhamsas has said —

" Indeed they who constantly cherish (the feeling of) lascivious passion, wrath, fear, affection, kinship or devotion towards *Śrī*

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Hari attain oneness with Him." *

Intense passion is aroused only for the object which is the best of all, which is full of supremacy in its entirety, which is full of sweetness in abundance, which is beautiful of all limbs, which is full of bliss, the Lord has all these things. Keeping this in mind an aspirant should constantly remain agonized with the sole desire of meeting Śrī Kṛṣṇa and this desire should grow from more to more. He should express his loving anger thus - 'You are very hard-hearted, You do not respond in spite of my so much imploring; remember just at present I am imploring You - Later You will have to wander about behind my back.' Dwelling upon the Lord, all the twenty-four hours he should show his loving pride thus - 'I have indeed the inexhaustable treasure (with me) in the form of God-remembrance, I have no need of You, if hundred times You need me, do come Yourself.' And so on.

* कामं क्रोधं भयं स्नेहमैक्यं सौहृदमेव च ।
नित्यं हरौ विदधतो यास्ति तन्मयतां हि ते ॥

(पाठ १०.२६.१५)

One more beautiful example of how passion, anger and pride should be directed towards God is a child wholly dependent on the mother. You may offer very valuable jewels to a small child, you may offer him very dainty articles to eat, you may show him great respect, you may sing his glories, you may talk to him about his attaining heaven and liberation, but leaving aside his mother and her breasts, he wants nothing else. Not to speak of wanting, he does not know anything else at all, for him the sole object to know and want is the mother. He cannot be satisfied with anything else in exchange for the mother. Even so a devotee should entertain a desire solely for the Lord indeed. The Lord alone should become the object of his desire.

The child has become a little grown up, has started walking about here and there, while walking he stumbled and fell down and started crying. Hearing the child's weeping the mother came running. The child became angry, he fell down himself but became angry with the mother. In his stammering voice, he says repeatedly, 'Why did you leave me alone?' Assuming a sense of pride, he gets offended and says 'Go away, I shall not speak to you. I shall not come into your lap' — The mother conciliates him, wants to pick him up into her lap, wants to give him a suck, but he runs on in front weeping. Why does he do so? Only because

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he feels that he has a natural right indeed over the mother. He considers the mother alone as his all. If he feels hungry, the mother is to blame, if he falls down, the mother is in fault, if he cannot sleep then again the mother is in fault and the punishment for a fault is to feel irritated and displeased (with the mother) - anger and haughtiness. Even so a dependent devotee too can demonstrate his passion, anger and pride etc. towards his Lord.

§§§§§

THE GLORY OF LOVING DEVOTEES

त्रिरूपभङ्गपूर्वकं नित्यदासनित्यकान्ताभजनात्मकं
वा प्रेमैव कार्यम्, प्रेमैव कार्यम् ॥६६॥

66. BREAKING AWAY THE THREE ROLES (OF MASTER, SERVANT AND SERVICE) ONE MUST ONLY LOVE (THE LORD) CONSTANTLY WITH THE DEVOTION OF A SERVANT OR WITH THE WIFELY DEVOTION, LOVE ONLY ONE MUST.

Master, servant and service or husband, wife and service to a husband - annihilating these three roles of the two groups one must only love the Lord constantly through the devotion of a servant or through wifely devotion. Later on in both the Dāsyabhāva (sentiment of a servant) and Kāntābhāva (wifely sentiment), unity with the Lord is attained. Surrendering everything - body, mind and speech - to the master in a disinterested spirit, not to recognize anybody else at all in the world leaving aside one's master - this is the ideal of Dāsyabhāva (devotion of a servant) - And the husband alone is my body, mind, wealth, destiny, intellect, substratum, life, life-breath, piety, liberation and the Lord; excepting the husband no other man at all exists in the world,

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the husband's wealth is my wealth, the husband's body my body, the husband's mind my mind, service rendered to the husband is service rendered to me, the husband's sovereignty is my sovereignty, the husband's honour my honour, the husband's disgrace my disgrace, the husband's life-breath my life-breath — in this way becoming devoted solely to the husband, her life depending on that of the husband, to remain ever engaged in an exclusive and disinterested service to him - this is the ideal of Kāntābhakti (wifely devotion). In fact both are one and the same, both have similarity, both are non-different. In the devotion of a servant too, forgetting all his own, he assumes the name and gotra of the master, whereas in wifely devotion indeed, Kāntābhāva (wifely sentiment) is attained only by merging one's name and gotra in those of the husband. In connection with the sentiment of a servant (Dāsyabhāva) Śrī Goswamiji Maharaj says —

' I belong to no caste or community nor do I want to belong to anybody else's caste or community, nobody is of any use to me, nor am I of use to anybody; this world and the other world - all these are in the hands of Rāma (Lord of Raghus) alone. The people are extremely ignorant, they do not even know the legend that the lineage (gotra) of a master alone is the lineage of the servant; whether I am pious or impious,

whether I am good or bad, what care I,
why should I go to somebody else's door —
whatsoever I am, I am Rāma's.' *

The family and the lineage of both the master and the servant have become one. Singing the glory of such Dāsyabhāva Bhagavatī Śrī Rādhā says to Uddhava, an excellent devotee —

' Of all the boons, the most excellent boon is the devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa or the service rendered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone. Of the five types of pre-eminent liberations, devotion to Śrī Hari alone is the best and more venerable. Brahma-hood, godhood, immortality, attainment of nectarean essence, attainment of Siddhis - the

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मेरे जातिपाँति न चाहैं काहूकी जातिपाँति,
मेरे कोऊ कामको न हौं काहूके कामको ।
लोक परलोक रघुनाथहीके हाथ सब,
भारी है भरोसो तुलसीके एक नामको ॥
अति ही अयाने उपखाने नहीं बूझैं लोग,
साहूहीको गोत गोत होत है गुलामको ।
साधु कै असाधु, कै भलो कै पोच, सोच कहा,
का काहूके द्वार परौं जो हौं सो हौं रामको ॥

कवितावाली, उत्तरकांड १०७

attainment of service to Śrī Hari is far more difficult than all these.' *

(Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa, Kṛṣṇa-Khanda, 97.8-9)

In wifely devotion, there is complete identification indeed —

" The love of my lord is indeed ensconced in my body; every hair on my body is saying 'lord', 'lord' and nothing else. Says 'Dadur', I would certainly write a letter to my beloved lord, were he somewhere abroad; when he abides in my body, mind and eyes, what need is then to send him a message.? " **

* कृष्णभक्तिः कृष्णदास्यं वरेषु च वरं वरम् ।
श्रेष्ठा पञ्चविधामुक्तेर्हरिभक्तिर्गरीयसी ॥
ब्रह्मत्वादपि देवत्वादिन्द्रत्वादमरादपि ।
अमृतात् सिद्धिलाभाच्च हरिदास्यं सुदुर्लभम् ॥

ब्र.वै.पु. (कृ.संह) ६७.८, ९

* प्रीति जो मेरे पीवकी बैठी पिंजर माहि ।
रोम रोम पिउ पिउ करै, 'दादुर' दूसर नाहि ॥
प्रीतमको पतियाँ लिखूँ, जो कहूँ होय विदेस ।
तनमें, मनमें, नैनमें, ताको कहा सँदेस ॥

The wife and husband indeed become one through an intimate union - therefore, in their case the trinity (existence of three separate forms) automatically gets broken. Says the author of the aphorisms - 'Keeping the ideal of such self-identification before you and giving room to this sentiment in your mind, do offer love only to the Lord through the sentiment of a servant or wifely sentiment.'

भक्ता एकान्तिनो मुख्याः ॥६७॥

67. EXCLUSIVE DEVOTEES ALONE ARE PRE-EMINENT.

Only an exclusive devotee of the Lord practising devotion according to the preceding aphorism is the best of all, because everything of his - body, mind, wealth - gets transformed into the Lord. He lives in the world like an instrument of God. His soul gets merged with the Supreme Soul (Paramātmā), his mind gets engrossed in the mind of the Supreme Soul. His eyes behold the Lord alone everywhere and always —

" The form of the Beloved abides in the eyes, where is the room for the form of another, seeing the inn full, O Rahim, the

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traveller himself goes back. " *

Says Kabir, 'Now, even collyrium cannot be applied (- for want of room) as the Beloved fully abides in the eyes, how can anything else find room there? During all the eight Paharas (a Pahara is equal to three hours) or the sixty-four Gharis (during day and night) I have nobody else at all (in my eyes), when Thou abideth in the eyes, even sleep can find no room there.' **

कण्ठावरोधरोमाञ्चाश्रुभिः परस्परं लपमानाः

पावयन्ति कुलानि पृथिवीं च ॥ ६८ ॥

68. CONVERSING WITH EACH OTHER IN A VOICE CHOKED WITH EMOTION, THRILLED WITH RAPTURE AND WITH EYES FULL OF TEARS, SUCH EXCLUSIVE DEVOTEES SANCTIFY THEIR FAMILIES AND THE EARTH.

* प्रीतम छबि नैनन बसी, पर छबि कहाँ समाय ।
भरी सराय 'रहीम' छखि, आप पथिक फिरि जाय ॥

** 'कबिरा' काजर-रेखहू, अब तो दर्द न जाय ।
नैननि पीतम रमि रहा, वूजा कहाँ समाय ॥
आठ पहर चौंसठ घरी, मेरे और न कोय ।
नैना माहीं तू बसै, नौदहिँ और न होय ॥

Gathering together, when exclusive devotees talk about their Beloved Lord, who is their very life, their ocean of Love then begins to surge. They cannot speak then even if they try to do so, their throat gets choked, the body gets thrilled with rapture and the rays of love emanating from every pore of theirs diffuse the lustre of unalloyed love in that place. The atmosphere of that place gets completely purified and filled with love. Overcome with love, and their eyes overflowing with tears of love those devotees then become submerged in the Supreme Bliss. Such a state is indeed very difficult to attain and is supremely pure; the families of all those fortunate ones who are able to attain that state indeed get sanctified, - (Says Tulasidasji) —

" Listen, Umā ! blessed is the family, worthy of adoration for the whole world and most hallowed too, in which is born an humble devotee of the illustrious Rāma (the hero of Raghu's line). " *

(Ra. ca. ma. VII.127)

*

सो कुल धन्य उमा सुनु जगत पूज्य सुपुनीत ।
श्रीरघुबीर परायन जेहि नर उपज बिनीत ॥

(रा.च.मा. ७/१२७)

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Rather, even the earth gets sanctified by their presence. At that time even a person, whose body comes in touch with the slightest amount of air which comes into contact with the body of those devotees - embodiments of pure Love, gets sanctified too. The scriptures say —

' The family becomes sanctified, the mother blessed, the earth holy by the birth of a person whose mind has become absorbed in the Supreme Brahma - the ocean of infinite Knowledge and Bliss.' *

Says the Lord in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* XI.xiv.24 —

" A man full of devotion to Me, - who speaks in a voice choked with emotion, whose heart melts (through affection), who weeps incessantly (at the thought of his separation from Me) and sometimes laughs (when reminded of the inwardness of My pastimes), (nay,) who sings unabashed at the top of his voice and dances (out of joy), - purifies

* कुलं पवित्रं जननी कृतार्था
वसुन्धरा पुण्यवती च तेन ।
अपारसंवित्सुखसागरेऽस्मिन्-
लीनं परे ब्रह्मणि यस्य चेतः ॥

(स्कन्ध. माहे. कौमारिका ५५.१४०)

the (whole) world." *

तीर्थोर्कुर्वन्ति तीर्थानि सुकर्मीकुर्वन्ति कर्माणि-
सच्छास्त्रीकुर्वन्ति शास्त्राणि ॥ ६९ ॥

69. SUCH DEVOTEES ENHANCE THE
SANCTITY OF SACRED PLACES, ADD GLORY
TO ACTIONS AND RENDER THE SCRIPTURES
HOLIER.

Sacred places transform sinful men and women into sinless and pure ones, but they get defiled by the constant association of sinful persons. That pollution of the holy places is washed away by the association of devotees. Getting propitiated by the austere penance of King Bhagīratha, son of Dilīpa and having manifested herself with the object of bestowing a boon on him, Goddess Śrī Gangājī (the presiding deity of the river Ganga) told him - 'O Bhagīratha ! How can I descend to the

* वाग्गद्गदा द्रवते यस्य चित्तं
रुदत्यभीक्ष्णं हसति क्वचिच्च ।
विलज्ज उद्गायति नृत्यते च
मद्भक्तियुक्तो भुवनं पुनाति ॥

(५१० ११.१४.२४)

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earth ? All the sinners of the world will indeed come and wash off their sins by bathing in my holy water ! But where shall I go and wash off the immense store of sin stored in me by these sinners. Have you given any thought to this ?' In reply to this Bhagīratha responded --

" King Bhagīratha submitted: Pious souls who have given up attachment to actions as well as to their fruit, are pure of mind, (nay,) foremost among the knowers of Brahma and capable of purifying the (whole) world, shall wash off your sin through the (very) contact of their body (while bathing in your water); for in them (in their heart) dwells Śrī Hari, the destroyer of sins." *

(Bha. IX. ix. 6)

The Prachetās praise the Lord thus --

" How can the meeting of such devotees of Yours, who go about (from place to place)

*

साधवो न्यासिनः शान्ता

ब्रह्मिष्ठा लोकपावनाः ।

हेरन्त्यघं तेऽङ्गसङ्गात्

तेष्वास्ते ह्यघभिद्धरिः ॥

(भा० ६. ६. ६)

with the intention of purifying the sacred places with (the touch of) their feet, not be welcome to him who is afraid of transmigration ? " * (Bha. IV.xxx.37)

Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira says to Vidura, the prince among devotees —

" Devotees of God like you, my lord, are not only consecrated themselves; but it is they who revive the sanctity of sacred places (that get polluted by the contact of sinners) by the living presence of Lord Viṣṇu (the Wielder of a mace), in their heart. " ** (Bha. I.xiii.10)

Similarly, those very actions which are enjoined by the scriptures and which the devotees start performing, become good actions and that very scripture which they respect is

* तेषां विचरतां पद्भ्यां तीर्थानां पावनेच्छया ।
भीतस्य किं न रोचेत तावकानां समागमः ॥

(भा० ४.३०.३७)

** भवद्विधा भागवतास्तीर्थभूताः स्वयं विभो ।
तीर्थीकुर्वन्ति तीर्थानि स्वान्तःस्थेन गदाभूता ॥

(भा० १.१३.१०)

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recognized as holy, rather it is no exaggeration even to say that the very place where the devotees reside, the very lake or stream in which they bathe, becomes a place of pilgrimage; whatsoever action the devotee performs that very action is called ideal and good and whatever counsels the devotees give those very ones are recognized as holy scriptures. Their dwelling place is indeed a holy place, their actions indeed are good actions and their utterances also are holy scriptures. This thing becomes abundantly clear on coming to know the secret behind a holy place, a good action and the Śāstras.

तन्मयाः ॥ ७० ॥

70. (BECAUSE) THEY ARE ABSORBED IN HIM.

Just as a river merging in the ocean becomes the ocean, even so surrendering everything of his - body, mind, intellect and egotism - to the Beloved Lord, a devotee too becomes absorbed in the Lord. Such a devotee is the Lord incarnate indeed, the entire subtle and gross atmosphere of the place where he lives becomes sanctified. For this very reason by his mere association, places of pilgrimage, actions and the scriptures become holy. It is through such devotees alone that the glory of

the Lord, the Lord's Name and Devotion to the Lord is enhanced and even the worst of sinners, be they men or women who happen to come in contact with them, get liberated effortlessly from this frightful mundane ocean.

मोदन्ते पितरो नृत्यन्ति देवताः सनाथा चेयं भूर्भवति ॥ ७१ ॥

71. (ON SEEING THE MANIFESTATION OF SUCH DEVOTEES) THE MANES ARE DELIGHTED, THE GODS BEGIN TO DANCE AND THIS EARTH GETS A PATRON (IN THEM).

The manifestation of devotees is auspicious for one and all; because all their actions are indeed naturally conducive to human welfare. Their influence enhances faith towards dharma among the people, belief is engendered in the rites relating to the manes and gods. Because of this, persons, who have strayed away from the path of dharma, tread the same again and start performing yajña (sacrifice), charity, Śrāddha (obsequial rites in honour of the manes), Tarpana (offering libation of water to gods and the manes) etc. which cause immense happiness to the gods and the manes. Through the glory of Devotion several preceding and succeeding generations of a devotee get liberated, therefore, seeing a devotee having been born in their family, the manes become enraptured with a firm hope of their liberation. It is said in the — Padmapurāṇa —

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' Having come to know the birth of a devotee of the Lord in their line the fathers and the forefathers begin to dance and strike their palms against the arms and thighs in glee with the hope that he would liberate them.' *

Obstinate devotees who crave for a blessed sight of the Lord are not satisfied with anything else, therefore, the Lord who is Truth-Consciousness - Bliss concretized manifests Himself in a Divine Form in order to make them happy by fondling them in His lap like an affectionate mother. As soon as He manifests Himself, starts the destruction of Asuras who are malevolent towards gods. Thus even gods begin to dance considering the appearance of a devotee indeed as the cause for the manifestation of the Lord. So long as the Lord or His loving and pious devotees do not appear (in the world) the Mother earth remains an orphan (as it were) till then, and when the devotees appear then the Lord too manifests Himself like the cow that runs affectionately after the calf. Therefore, with the mere appearance of a devotee the earth becomes protected.

* आस्फोटयन्ति पितरो नृत्यन्ति च पितामहाः ।
मर्दंशे वैष्णवो जातः स नस्त्राता भविष्यति ॥

(प. पु.)

नास्ति तेषु जातिविद्यारूपकुलघनकियादिभेदः ॥ ७२ ॥

72. AMONG THEM (THE DEVOTEES) THERE IS NO DISCRIMINATION DUE TO CASTE, LEARNING, BEAUTY, LINEAGE, WEALTH AND ACTIONS ETC.

The author of the aphorisms here expounds that in devotion, importance is not attached to caste, learning, beauty, wealth and actions etc. — be he a brahmin or a śūdra, educated or uneducated, beautiful or ugly, of a high family or a low family, wealthy or poor and very active or inactive, He alone, who dedicating his all to the Lord engrosses his mind constantly in His loving remembrance, attains the treasure in the form of devotion so supremely difficult to attain. Niṣāda was born of a low caste, Sadana was a butcher, Sabarī was a rustic woman, Dhruva was an uneducated child, Bibhiṣaṇa and Hanumāna etc. were ugly and ignoble ogres and monkeys, Vidura and Sudāmā were penniless, the Gopīs were devoid of (scriptural) actions, but all of them attained Divine Love through the glory of their devotion and surrender, nay, they became supremely beloved of the Lord. That man alone, who has in his heart the devotion, resulting from all righteous actions, is a devotee, he alone is possessed of all good qualities, whosoever he may be. This very thing has been said in Śrī Rāmācharitamānasa —

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He alone is omniscient and accomplished, he alone is wise, he alone is an ornament of the globe, learned and munificent, he alone is pious and the saviour of his race, whose mind is devoted to the feet of Śrī Rāma. He alone is perfect in correct behaviour and most sagacious, he alone has thoroughly grasped the conclusion of the Vedas, and he alone is a seer, a man of erudition and staunch in battle, who adores the Hero of Raghu's line in a guileless spirit." * (Ra. ca. Ma. VII.126/1-4)

" Answered the Lord of Raghus: 'Listen, O good lady, to My words, I recognize no other kinship except that of devotion. Despite caste, kinship, lineage, piety, reputation, wealth, physical strength, numerical strength of his family, accomplishments and ability, a man lacking in devotion is of no more worth than a

* सोइ सर्वग्य गुनी सोइ ग्याता । सोइ महि मंडित पंडित दाता ॥
 धर्म परायन सोइ कुल आता । राम चरन जाकर मन राता ॥
 नीति निपुन सोइ परम सयाना । श्रुति सिद्धांत नीक तेहि जाना ॥
 सोइ कबि कोबिद सोइ रनधीरा । जो छल छादि भजइ रघुबीरा ॥

(रा.च.मा. ७.१२६/१-४)

cloud without water." *

(Ra. ca. Ma. III.34/4-6)

It, however, does not mean that considering himself superior to all and possessed of all good qualities a devotee gets himself worshipped by all and claims equal rights for himself with superiors in society, caste, Varna (caste as applied to the four principal castes) and Āsrama, (stage in religious life) in respect of eating and drinking, marriage, social behaviour, mode of living, religious observances and family traditions etc. Indeed a devotee is a renouncer of pride altogether, why would he then do such a thing by burdening himself with this new false pride? Those who do so are not (real) devotees. There is a difference between devotion and the rules of Varṇāśrama. Those persons who wish to abolish the rules of Varṇāśrama in the name of devotion indeed put a slur upon devotion. The aspirants treading the path of devotion should, therefore, never even think of renouncing the

* कह रघुपति सुनु भामिनिबाता । मानउँ एक भगति कर नाता ॥
जाति पाँति कुल धर्म बढाई । धन बलपरिजन गुन चतुराई ॥
भगति हीन नर सोहइ कैसा । बिनु जल बारिद देखिअ जैसा ॥

(रा.च.मा. ३.३४/४-६)

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Sāstras. It is true that learning and wealth cannot be attained if these are not a part of one's destiny, nor is it possible even to change one's appearance, caste and lineage in this life. But due to the presence or absence and the lack or abundance of all these things, we should not form a high or low opinion about a devotee — attaching due importance to his devotion (alone) we should never look down upon a devotee owing to his caste etc. being different. This is why in the Vaiṣṇava scriptures it is declared as an offence to discriminate among the devotees on grounds of caste etc. *

* In the Vaiṣṇava treatises the following sixty-four items have been declared as offences. To go forth in life bearing them in mind can be highly beneficial —

- (1) To regard God as some deity or some particular substance,
- (2) To account the Vedas as mere books or written by men,
- (3) To discriminate among the devotees on grounds of caste,
- (4) To look upon the preceptor as an ordinary person,
- (5) To consider the image of the Lord as mere wood, stone, metal, paper or clay,
- (6) To consider the Charaṇodaka of the Lord (water in which the blessed feet of the Lord have been washed) as ordinary water,
- (7) To consider the Prasāda of God (food offered to God) as ordinary food,
- (8) To treat Tulasī

यतस्तदीयाः ॥ ७३ ॥

73. BECAUSE THEY (ALL THE DEVOTEES) ARE HIS ALONE.

(the holy basil) as an ordinary plant, (9) To regard a cow as an ordinary animal, (10) To regard the *Bhāgavata* and the *Gītā* as ordinary books, (11) To regard the pastimes of the Lord as human acts, (12) To compare the pastimes of the Lord with worldly love or sexual intercourse, (13) To treat the Gopīs as wives of other men, (in respect of the Lord), (14) To consider the *Rāsalīlā* as an amorous act, (15) To observe precautions about touchables or untouchables on the occasion of the Lord's festivals, (16) To become an atheist by disbelieving God and the scriptures, (17) To practise dharma with a doubtful mind, (18) To be slothful in practising dharma, (19) To test devotees by external things, (20) To criticize the merits and demerits of sadhus and Mahatmas, (21) To consider oneself as the best, (22) To revile any god or any scripture whatsoever, (23) To sit with one's back towards the image of the Lord, (24) To approach an image of the Lord with one's shoes on, (25) To put on a garland in the presence of the Lord's image, (26) To approach the image of the Lord with a stick in hand,

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Through the glory of their devotion, the devotees get transformed into the form of the Lord alone, this is why they have no sense of

(27) To approach the Lord's image with blue garments on, (28) To approach His image without washing one's mouth and cleaning one's teeth, (29) To enter a temple without changing one's clothes after the evacuation of bowels or sexual intercourse, (30) To stretch out one's arms and legs before an image of the Lord, (31) To chew betel-leaves in the presence of the Lord's image, (32) To laugh loudly before an image of the Lord, (33) To make an improper gesture, (34) To hover about women, (35) To become angry, (36) To offer reverential salutations to any one in the presence of the Lord's image, (37) To visit a temple after eating some evil-smelling thing and without getting rid of the foul smell, (38) To take an intoxicant, (39) To insult or assault anyone, (40) To make gestures indicating lust or anger etc. (41) Not to welcome a stranger or a sadhu, (42) To regard oneself as a devotee, a pious soul, a learned man or a virtuous person, (43) To associate with atheists, libertines, hurtful men, greedy persons and liars, (44) To throw blame on God in one's adversity, (45) To practise dharma with a sinful motive, (46) To regard oneself as righteous by oppressing any one even slightly, (47) Not to support one's wife, sons, family, dependents, the destitutes and sadhus, (48) To offer

difference among themselves and not one of them considers himself as superior on any ground whatsoever.

§§§§

something to God treating it as one's own object of enjoyment or to enjoy it without offering it to God, (49) To swear by the name of one's chosen deity, (50) To earn money by selling one's dharma and the Name of God, (51) To expect something from anyone other than one's chosen deity, (52) To violate the injunctions of the Sāstras, (53) To behave like one who has realized Brahma without having realized Brahma, (54) To treat the Vaisnavas as superior or inferior according to different religious bodies, (55) To behave like a god, (56) To revile Avatāras by differentiating between their Līlās, (57) To say to anyone even in jest, "you alone are God", (58) To consider even through forgetfulness that the Lord is dependent on some one, (59) To offer Divine Prasāda or Charaṇodaka to anyone out of greed, (60) To insult a picture, an image or Name of the Lord, (61) To cause pain to any living being indeed in any way, to terrify or to harm anyone, (62) To renounce one's faith in God on being vanquished in argumentation or on not being able to establish a principle, (63) To regard the birth and activities of the incarnations of the Lord as commonplace, (64) To entertain a sense of duality in the Divine Couple.

HINDERANCE IN THE FORM OF CONTROVERSY

वादो नावलम्ब्यः ॥ ७४ ॥

74. A DEVOTEE SHOULD NOT ENTER INTO CONTROVERSY.

For the aspirants treading the path of devotion this aphorism is of great importance indeed. A devotee has no need at all to enter into any argumentation. He should bear in mind that every moment of his life indeed has already been dedicated to the remembrance of the Lord and that he has no right at all to utilize it in any other work. Then again what indeed should he argue about ? When the creation took place, how it took place, why it took place, what its fundamental essence is — he has no need to know all these things. Accepting and knowing the Lord as his all-in-all he has made Him his sole goal. The Lord will Himself reveal His own Reality when He wishes, when He will reveal it, whether He will reveal it or not — he should have no anxiety at all even on this account. Leaving aside the remembrance of his Beloved Lord, there should be no room at all in his mind to reflect upon anything else. And this too is certain that the essence cannot also be attained through controversy. This is why it is stated in the

Brahma-sūtras 'Argument has no stability'
 'तर्काप्रतिष्ठानात्' (1.1.11). It is said in the
Kathopnīśad - 'नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया' (1.2.9) -
 'that essence cannot be attained through
 intellectual argumentation'. That true essence
 reveals itself automatically to a sattvic
 individual with a pure mind. To some extent
 it is also true that through repeated discussion
 knowledge of the essence springs up
 'वादे वादे जायते तत्त्वबोधः', but that argumentation
 'Vāda' is different. With the intention of
 seeking knowledge a devout disciple presents
 his arguments before the preceptor and
 dispelling his doubt the preceptor expounds
 the truth to him with even stronger arguments.
 Such argumentation is not blameworthy. But
 the controversy which has pertinacity behind it
 certainly produces harmful results and later on
 one becomes stubborn in one's opinions. Then
 the principle aimed at is lost sight of and this
 leads to personal fault-finding, accusation and
 mutual vilification. The sense of discrimination
 disappears, the spirit of anger prevails, speech
 gets out of control and animosity comes to
 exist for ever. This is why it is said that
 'the fire of animosity bursts forth through
 controversy 'वादे वादे वर्द्धते वैरवद्भिः'. An aspirant
 treading the path of devotion should indeed find
 no leisure which he may use for controversy.
 As far as possible he should certainly keep
 aloof from a place where a controversy is
 raging. If, however, through a decree of

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destiny he ever happens to fall in the company of controversialists, he should then adopt an humble attitude, listen to what they say and not prolong the discussion by giving a reply in return ' अतृणे पतितो बहिः स्वयमेवोपशाम्यति ' - 'when no fuel is added to the fire it will be automatically extinguished' - the disputants themselves will get tired. Silence is, therefore, the best for a devotee. He should bear in mind the maxim - 'Silence is the means to attain all objects' - 'मौनं सर्वार्थ साधनम्'. He should not indeed listen to such talks of anybody as may create a doubt in his mind regarding his chosen deity, his path, his faith and his spiritual endeavour; and he himself should not speak to anyone in a manner which may wound his feelings. If per chance he has to listen to somebody's talk, he should do so; but he himself should never enter into an argument for the sake of argument to stifle the other party and to establish his point of view. It does never mean that he should say nothing to a sincere seeker or that if occasion demands he should not tender beneficial advice even though unasked for. The purport indeed is that he should not enter into controversy. Unnecessarily indeed he should not speak but when keeping quiet will not do, he should then speak only as much as will serve the purpose regarding it as necessary. He

should not exaggerate things, should not speak in a spirit of argumentation, should not oppose anybody, should not cut a joke with anybody, should not point out the faults of anyone, should not hurt the feelings of anyone, should not praise himself or his doctrine, should not speak evil of anybody, should not speak bitterly, should not speak with a feeling of expectation or desire, should not mislead anybody with his words and should not create any doubt in the mind of anybody about his faith. Whatever he speaks should be true, sweet, agreeable, non-agitating and beneficial; the rest of his time should be devoted to the remembrance of the Lord's Name. Uttering even one word unnecessarily should be regarded as a great loss because that much time has gone waste. During that period Nāma-japa through the tongue was abandoned, leaving aside the effect which the unnecessary word created in the atmosphere. He ought to feel sure that through an argument and controversy Divine Love, Knowledge or the Lord can never be attained. Argumentation indeed results in the gathering together of egotism, hatred, anger, violence and animosity. He should, therefore, always remain aloof from controversy - (Goswami Tulasidas says —)

" Realizing this those who know the truth about Him and are full of dispassion adore

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Śrī Rāma, discarding all the logical speculation." * (Ra. ca. Ma. VI.73/2)

" Pondering thus, O Garuḍa of resolute mind, abandon all cavilling and scepticism and adore the all-beautiful Śrī Rāma, the Hero of Raghu's line, a fountain of mercy and the delight of all." ** (Ra. ca. Ma. VII.90)

बाहुल्यावकाशदनियतत्वाच्च ॥ ७५ ॥

75. BECAUSE (IN CONTROVERSY) THERE IS ROOM FOR EXCESS (ARGUMENTATION) AND IT IS UNCERTAIN.

Indicating the reasons says the author of the aphorisms that in controversy a debate

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अस विचारि जे तग्य बिरागी ।

रामहि भजहि तरक सब त्यागी ॥

(रा.च.मा. ६.७३/२)

**

अस विचारि मति धीर तजि कुतर्क संसय सकल ।

भजिअ राम रनधीर कहनाकर सुंदर सुखद ॥

(रा.च.मा. ७.६०)

ensues and it goes on increasing indeed. In order to support their own doctrines both the parties use arguments and counter-arguments and the debate gets prolonged. The object which can be attained only through Divine grace can indeed never be attained through argumentation. Controversy, therefore, does no good at all. If any one side scores a victory because the other party feels fatigued due to continuous speaking or due to failing to put forth the argument on the spur of the moment that too cannot indeed be accepted as conclusive, because that is certainly not the final truth. Therefore, without wasting time in controversy and depending on Him in every way, a devotee should remember the Lord constantly with supreme faith in a guileless and disinterested spirit. Divine Love is not attained through argumentation, nay, it is attained through devotion alone.

§§§§§§§§§§

MAIN AIDS IN ATTAINING DEVOTION

भक्तिशास्त्राणि मननीयानि तदुद्बोधक-
कर्माण्यपि करणीयानि ॥ ७६ ॥

76. (FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF LOVING DEVOTION) ONE SHOULD CONTINUE TO DWELL UPON DEVOTIONAL SCRIPTURES AND ALSO PERFORM SUCH ACTIONS AS ARE CONDUCTIVE TO THE GROWTH OF DEVOTION.

Persons aspiring for devotion should neither read any book nor perform any action - this is not so. (Rather) abandoning controversy they ought to read repeatedly and certainly such books as may contain a narration of devotion for the Lord, the glory of devotion, a description of the means to attain devotion, stories of the pious lives of the loving devotees of the Lord, and a description of the glories, mysteries and attributes of the Lord who remains subservient to devotion. Loving devotion towards the Lord awakens by studying such devotional scriptures and by listening to and reading the utterances of Mahatmas, devotees and saints. However, persons aspiring for devotion should never read or listen to such books as may contain a refutation of the Lord and devotion, a belittlement of their glory,

vituperation of the devotees or a description of the greatness of the worldly enjoyments alone. Those books too which may not contain the glory of the Lord, devotion and devotees do not benefit them. Besides, literature, which gives rise to attachment and aversion, passion and anger and enmity and opposition should not even be touched. This is why it is said --

' That Sāstra or Purana in which one does not find anything about the devotion to the Lord should not be listened to, even though it may have been narrated by Brahmā.' *

In addition, only such actions as may awaken and promote devotion should be performed. The aspirant seeking devotion should renounce the prohibited actions (sins) altogether. The person, who does not wish to give up sinful actions out of attachment for sense-enjoyments and desires to be called a devotee, is either himself under a delusion or wishes to spread delusion deliberately.

The following are the main actions conducive to the attainment of devotion —

*

यस्मिन् शास्त्रे पुराणे वा हरिमर्किर्न दृश्यते ।
श्रोतव्यं नैव तच्छास्त्रं यदि ब्रह्मा स्वयं वदेत् ॥

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1. As far as possible, complete observation of duties laid down for one's Varna and Āśrama. Renunciatory conduct for a Brahmachārī, Vānaprastha and Sanyāsī and for a Gr̥hastha (householder) maintenance with affection and respect of his parents, wife, children and other members of the family etc. dependent on him with the object of attaining Divine pleasure, earning of his livelihood through lawful and truthful means and performance of sacrifices, charities, and austerities, etc. in accordance with the scriptures;

2. observance of right conduct;

3. to attend Satsanga and to listen to, dwell upon and chant loudly the eulogies of the Lord;

4. japa (muttering), remembrance and Kirtana of the Divine Name;

5. worshipping, praising, supplicating and saluting the Lord;

6. rendering service to the saints and devotees and carrying out their behests faithfully;

7. residing in places of pilgrimage;

8. to show compassion to the destitute and to render services to them with one's body, mind and wealth as far as possible;

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9. offering all actions to God; and
10. the practice of seeing God in all beings.

The Lord Himself says --

" * Keenness to hear My nectar-like stories, repeated exposition of My stories when they have been (duly) heard, intense devotion to (My) worship, and glorifying Me with songs of praise, enthusiasm in doing service to Me (in the form of sweeping My temple and

* श्रद्धामृतकथायां मे शश्वन्मदनुकीर्तनम् ।
परिनिष्ठा च पूजायां स्तुतिभिः स्तवनं मम ॥
आदरः परिचर्यायां सर्वाङ्गैरभिवन्दनम् ।
मङ्गलपूजाभ्यधिका सर्वभूतेषु मन्मतिः ॥
मदर्थेष्वङ्गचेष्टा च वचसा मदगुणेरणम् ।
मय्यर्पणं च मनसः सर्वकामविवर्जनम् ॥
मदर्थेऽर्थपरित्यागो भोगस्य च सुखस्य च ।
इष्टं दत्तं हुतं जप्तं मदर्थं यद्व्रतं तपः ॥
एवं धर्मेऽनुष्ठाना मुद्धवात्मनिवेदिनाम् ।
मयि सञ्जायते भक्तिः कोऽन्योऽर्थोऽस्यावशिष्यते ॥

(५१० ११.१६.२०-२४)

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so on), saluting Me with all the eight limbs (viz: the head, breast, hands, knees and feet), offering much more devoted worship to My devotees and looking upon all created beings as Myself; directing (all) the movements of one's body to pursuits intended to propitiate Me (e.g. plucking basil leaves and flowers etc. for My worship), to utter My praises (alone) with one's speech, resigning the mind to Me, and giving up all (one's) desires; spurning for My sake (in order to be able to carry on My adoration uninterruptedly) wealth as well as the means of enjoyment (luxuries) and self-gratification, (all of which generally interfere with Devotion) and undertaking sacrificial performances, practising charity, offering oblations into the sacred fire, muttering prayers, observing fasts and other sacred vows and (other) austerities (in the form of undergoing hardships sanctioned by the Śāstras) done for My sake — all these are stepping stones to Devotion. Devotion (consisting in all-absorbing Love for Me, the reward of all spiritual endeavours) to Me develops, by (following) such righteous courses, in the heart of men who dedicate (to My service) their (very) self (in the shape of their psycho-physical organism as well as all that is connected with it), O Uddhava ! What other object remains for

such a devotee to be accomplished ? (In other words, all his objects are accomplished as a matter of course through Devotion alone). " (Bha. XI.xix.20-24)

The chief of yogis named Prabuddha has narrated thus the means of attaining devotion to Mahārājā Nimi --

" Therefore, one desirous of knowing the highest good should resort to a preceptor who is versed in the Vedas (which embody Brahma in the form of words), has realized the ultimate Reality and who is free from attachment and hatred. Under the preceptor, whom one should love as one's own self and as the object of one's devotion, one should, by rendering devoted service to him, learn the ways, of life of the Lord's, devotees, by which Srī Hari is pleased - Srī Hari, who is the Soul of the universe and gives Himself away to His devotees. First the disciple should learn detachment of the mind from all objects (body, children etc.) and attachment to the Lord's devotees. And he should also learn to cherish in all sincerity, compassion, friendliness and humility towards one's inferiors, equals and superiors respectively. He should (further) learn (to acquire) purity (external and internal), devotion to his religious duties, endurance, control over

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his speech, a habit to study the scriptures, sincerity, continence, non-violence and evenness of mind under the stress of dualities (like pleasure and pain, profit and loss). He should learn to see the Ātmā (as the intelligent substance) and Īśwara (the Ruling Principle) pervading all, live in solitude, without any sense of possession for any dwelling, wear pure clothing or rags (stitched together) and feel satisfied with whatever he could get for food. He should (also) learn to have faith in the scriptures celebrating the Lord, without disparaging other scriptures, and curb his mind, speech and actions (through control of breath, tongue and activity respectively), and to be truthful and able to control the senses and mind. He should learn to hear, sing and dwell on the story of the advent, pastimes and excellences of Lord Śrī Hari of wonderful deeds and to do everything for (pleasing) Him. He should (further) learn to offer to the supreme Lord all his sacrificial activities, gifts, austerities, repetition of the sacred syllables, righteous conduct, and all that he likes for himself, (nay,) his wife, children, house and his very life. He should also learn to love devotedly those persons who have realized Śrī Kṛṣṇa as their own Self and as the Lord of their life, to serve the mobile and immobile creatures (as the embodiments

of the Lord); and (specially) to serve human beings and among them more specially those who adhere to their own duty and are devotees of the Lord. He should (further) learn to expound and discuss among the devotees the sacred glory of the Lord, and in association with others find delight and satisfaction resulting in the freedom of the mind from egotism. (Thus) remembering and reminding one another of Śrī Hari, who destroys innumerable sins (in an instant), their devotion turning into divine love, the devotees filled with rapture experience a thrill of joy." * (Bha. XI.iii.21-31)

*

तस्माद् गुरुं प्रपद्येत जिज्ञासुः श्रेय उत्तमम् ।
 शब्दे परे च निष्णातं ब्रह्मण्युपशमाश्रयम् ॥
 तत्र भागवतान् धर्मान् शिक्षेद् गुर्वात्मदैवतः ।
 अमाययानुवृत्त्या यैस्तुष्येदात्माऽऽत्मदो हरिः ॥
 सर्वतो मनसोऽसङ्गमादौ सङ्गं च साधुषु ।
 दयां मैत्रीं प्रश्रयं च भूतेष्वद्धा यथोचितम् ॥
 शौचं तपस्तिक्ष्णं च मौनं स्वाध्यायमार्जवम् ।
 ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसां च समत्वं द्वन्द्वसंज्ञयोः ॥
 सर्वत्रात्मेश्वरान्वीक्षां कैवल्यमनिकेतताम् ।
 विविक्तचरित्रवसनं सन्तोषं येन केनचित् ॥
 श्रद्धां भागवते शास्त्रेऽनिन्दामन्यत्र चापि हि ।
 मनोवाक्कर्मदण्डं च सत्यं शमदमावपि ॥

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It is in this way that devotion grows by listening to and reading the mainly devotional books like the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata*, the *Śrīmad Bhagvad-gītā*, the *Śrī Rāmāyaṇa* etc. and performing virtuous actions which enhance devotion e.g. Satsanga, Nāma-japa, Nāma-kīrtana etc. in the manner mentioned above with the object of propitiating the Lord. A devotee should always remain busy in the practice of pious conduct and virtuous actions alone, then alone will grow his devotion.

While describing the marks of these loving devotees Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has said in the *Śrīmad Bhagvad-gītā* XII.13-20 —

(contd....from page 254)

श्रवणं कीर्तनं ध्यानं हरेरद्भुतकर्मणः ।
जन्मकर्मगुणानां च तदर्थेऽखिलचेष्टितम् ॥
इष्टं दत्तं तपो जप्तं वृत्तं यच्चात्मनः प्रियम् ।
दारान् सुतान् गृहान् प्राणान् यत् परस्मै निवेदनम् ॥
एवं कृष्णात्मनाथेषु मनुष्येषु च सौहृदम् ।
परिचर्यां बोभयन्न महत्सु नृषु साधुषु ॥
परस्परानुकथनं पावनं भगवद्यशः ।
मिथो रतिर्मिथस्तुष्टिर्निवृत्तिर्मिथ आत्मनः ॥
स्मरन्तः स्मारयन्तश्च मिथोऽघौघहरं हरिम् ।
भक्त्या सञ्जातया भक्त्या बिभ्रस्युत्पुलकां तनुम् ॥

(श्रीमद्भा० ११ । ३ । २१—३१)

" * He, who is free from malice towards all beings, friendly and compassionate, rid of 'I' and 'mine', balanced in joy and

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अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
 निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥
 सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
 मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥
 यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
 हर्षामर्षमयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥
 अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
 सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥
 यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
 शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥
 समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
 शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥
 तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
 अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥
 ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
 भद्रधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥

(गीता १२.१३-२०)

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sorrow, forgiving by nature, ever-contented and mentally united with Me, nay, who has subdued his mind, senses and body, has a firm resolve, and has surrendered his mind and reason to Me, - that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. (13,14)

He, who is not a source of annoyance to his fellow-creatures, and who in his turn does not feel vexed with his fellow-creatures, and who is free from delight and envy, perturbation and fear, is dear to Me. (15)

He, who wants nothing, who is both internally and externally pure, is clever and impartial and has risen above all distractions, and who renounces the feeling of doership in all undertakings, - that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. (16)

He, who neither rejoices nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, and who renounces both good and evil actions and is full of devotion, is dear to Me. (17)

He, who is alike to friend and foe, as well as to honour and ignominy, who remains balanced in heat and cold, pleasure and pain and other contrary experiences, and is free from attachment, who takes praise and reproach alike, and is given to contemplation and contented with any means of subsistence

whatsoever, entertaining no sense of ownership and attachment in respect of his dwelling-place and full of devotion to Me, that man is dear to Me. (18,19)

Those devotees, however, who partake in a disinterested way of this nectar of pious wisdom set forth above, endowed with faith and solely devoted to Me, they are extremely dear to Me." (20)

These marks pointed out by the Lord are indeed naturally present in the God-realized devotees and accepting them as their ideal, the aspirants seeking devotion should endeavour to act in accordance with them.

Thus through a study of and reflection upon the devotional scriptures and by remaining busy in the means which enhance devotion, a devotee attains loving devotion difficult to attain by yogis.

मुखदुःखेच्छालाभादित्यक्ते काले प्रतीक्षमाणे
क्षणार्द्धमपि व्यर्थं न नेयम् ॥ ७७ ॥

77. EVEN HALF A MOMENT SHOULD NOT BE WASTED (WITHOUT BHAJAN) WHILE WAITING FOR THE TIME WHEN PAIN AND PLEASURE, DESIRE AND WORLDLY GAIN ETC. MAY BE RENOUNCED (ENTIRELY).

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There is no doubt that on the perfect attainment of devotion all the pairs of opposites like pain and pleasure, gain and loss etc. vanish by themselves and then there lingers no desire for any object. But if an aspirant simply waits for such an auspicious time without undergoing any discipline whatsoever, how then indeed will that auspicious state be suddenly attained by itself without destroying the present miserable plight ? Moreover, there is no knowing of human life even for a moment, no one knows at which moment dissolution may take place, when death may come; therefore, an aspirant should give up the resolution, 'I shall practise the remembrance of the Lord when such and such a condition comes to exist', and the aspirant should commence his Sādhanā in that very condition in which he finds himself at present by seeking refuge in the Divine grace. There should be no delay even of half a moment. Says Kabir —

' Do today what you wish to do tomorrow, do now what you wish to do today; in a trice dissolution will overtake you, when will you do it then ? ' *

* काल करै सो आज कर, आज करै सो अब ।
पलमें परलै होयगी, फेरि करैगा कब ॥

Even while twinkling your eyes, you will be in the cruel jaws of death, when will you do it then? Do not presume, 'I am of a young age just at present, this is the time to play, eat and enjoy the worldly objects; I shall practise Bhajana when I grow old, who can say that you will not die even before you grow very old? The naked sword of death is indeed ever hanging on your head. There is an illustration to support this. There was a Bhramara (large black bee), and sitting inside a lotus flower, it was sucking its nectar and feeling intoxicated with its fragrance; meanwhile the dusk approached. Immediately the sun sets, a lotus flower closes, so the lotus flower got closed, and the Bhramara possessing the power to bore through large sal (*Shorea robusta*) and Shisham (*Dalbergia Sissoo*) got shut up inside the flower because of the attachment for sense-objects and began to reflect as follows :-

' The night will pass off, the day will dawn, the sun will rise, and when by the falling of his rays the lotus will immediately bloom again, I shall then get out of it. Meanwhile let me continue to enjoy the flower honey'. While the Bhramara was indeed reflecting thus, there came a mad elephant that uprooted the lotus (plant), placed it in its mouth and along with the lotus the Bhramara too got ground between the elephant's teeth. Its mental desire

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remained in its mind alone. *

Therefore, the thought, that we shall practise Bhajana only when such and such actions are completed, should indeed be given up. Firstly, the desires agreeable to one's mind are not fulfilled at all and if they are, the accomplishment of one desire then brings in its wake innumerable new and new wants, and one has then to apply oneself in the effort to accomplish them. Complete satisfaction can indeed never be achieved through the worldly objects which are incomplete, full of deficiency and transient. Howsoever gain one may achieve, there will always be a want and a licentious man will have indeed to die suffering from the pangs of want. Therefore, giving up the hope of a time when one will completely attain the worldly objects and attain complete satisfaction through sense-enjoyments, one should from the very start apply oneself to Bhajana.

* रात्रिर्गमिष्यति भविष्यति सुप्रभातं
 भास्वानुदेष्यति हसिष्यति पङ्कजश्रीः ।
 इत्थं विचिन्तयति कोशगते द्विरेफे
 हा हन्त हन्त नलिनीं गज उज्जहार ॥

Besides, there is one other point worth consideration. It is that just at present due to good company, a desire has sprung up in our mind to attain the Lord or His devotion and we have for a moment accepted God-realization as our life's goal, but we think that we shall undergo the necessary discipline to achieve this goal when such and such conditions are fulfilled. Is not this thought of ours a deceptive one? First of all it is not certain that such and such a state will be achieved and then who can say that by that time our goal will not be changed. But if we apply ourselves just now to achieve our goal of God-realization, then the more we move forward on the path of Sādhana, the more will our love for it grow, gain too will be experienced and the practice too will go on getting firm. On the contrary if we indeed keep quiet by merely accepting the goal alone, the very next moment then our goal will change when we have a different type of company. Therefore, without waiting for a favourable opportunity we should start the practice of Bhajan at once. The favourable opportunity of a good desire obtained through Satsanga should never be lost. Even this is not certain that our health will always be satisfactory. So long as the health is sound, till then alone Sādhana and Bhajana can be practised. On the health getting impaired, the sense-organs getting incapacitated, and on attaining old age we cannot apply our mind even to Bhajana if there is no

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previous thorough practice. This is why Bhartrhari has said --

' So long as the body is healthy, senility has not approached, the sense-organs are in full vigour, some days of the life are still left, till then alone a wise man should make an effort sincerely for his (spiritual) welfare. What purpose will digging a well serve when the house is on fire ? ' *

This is why the devotees taking refuge in the Lord cry out to Him —

' Life is ebbing away every day before our very eyes, youth is passing away, the days gone by do not come back, Kāla (Time spirit) is devouring the world, Goddess Lakṣmī (Goddess of Fortune) is fickle like a wave of water and life indeed is unsteady like a flash of lightning, therefore, O Lord,

* यावत्स्वस्थमिदं कलेवरगृहं यावच्च दूरे जरा
यावच्चेन्द्रियशक्तिरप्रतिहता यावत्क्षयो नायुषः ।
आत्मश्रेयसि तावदेव विदुषा कार्यः प्रयत्नो महान्
प्रोद्दीप्ते भवने च कूपखननं प्रत्युद्यमः कीदृशः ॥

(पर्वहरि वैराग्य-शतक)

the refuge of all, protect me, a refugee of Yours just now.' *

' O Kṛṣṇa ! May this swan in the form of my mind enter this very day the cage in the form of Your lotus feet. How shall I remember You at the time of death when the throat will get choked by the growth of phlegm, wind (Vāyu) and bile (Pitta) ? ' **

Therefore, not even an iota of time should be spent without the Bhajana of the Lord. That time alone which is spent in the Lord's adoration is purposeful, the rest is all meaningless. Recognizing the value of time it

*
आयुर्नश्यति पश्यतां प्रतिदिनं याति क्षयं यौवनं
प्रत्यायान्ति गताः पुनर्न दिवसाः कालो जगद्भक्षकः ।
लक्ष्मीस्तोयतरङ्गभङ्गचपला विद्युच्चलं जीवितं
तस्मान्मां शरणागतं शरणद त्वं रक्ष रक्षाधुना ॥

** कृष्ण त्वदीयपदपङ्कजपञ्जरान्ते
अद्यैव मे विशतु मानसराजहंसः ।
प्राणप्रयाणसमये कफवातपित्तैः
कण्ठावरोधनविधौ स्मरणं कुतस्ते ॥

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is in the fitness of things to utilize every breath in the remembrance of the Lord alone with great care like the limited resources of a miser. As a matter of fact time devoid of Bhajana (adoration) alone is dangerous time for us. That alone is the greatest calamity. Said Hanūmana —

" There is no misfortune other than ceasing to remember and adore You." *

(Ra. ca. Ma. V.31/3)

' That Ghari or that moment alone which has gone by without the glorification of the Lord should be considered as the greatest loss, ignorance and delusion.' **

We should not wait at all for any favourable opportunity for the remembrance of the Lord. Otherwise our priceless human life itself will go in vain. Remembrance of the Lord alone is the best and venerable action of

* कह हनुमान बिपति प्रभु सोई ।

जब तव सुमिरन भजन न होई ॥

(रा.च.मा. ५.३१/३)

**

सा हानिस्तन्मद्वच्छिद्रं स मोहः स च विभ्रमः ।
यन्मुहूर्तं क्षणं वापि वासुदेवं न कीर्तयेत् ॥

human life. While practising Bhajana continuously, one day all our pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain etc. will vanish by themselves through the grace of God, and our heart will start shining with the limpid light of Divine Love. All the quarters and the entire universe will be filled with that pure, cool and resplendent light and then there will be no limit to our happiness.

In fact, a devotee should not even reflect what might be the outcome of Bhajana; his duty lies simply in practising Bhajana with love. Love for the sake of love and Bhajana for the sake of Bhajana have to be practised. To worship the Lord becomes his nature, he cannot help worshipping Him at all. He can tolerate everything but the discontinuity of Bhajana is intolerable to him.

It is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* XI.ii.53 —

" He is the foremost of the votaries of Lord Viṣṇu, whose memory of the Lord is ever fresh, and who even for the sovereignty of all the three worlds (heaven, earth and the intermediate region) and even for half the time taken by the twinkling of an eye does not turn away from (the adoration of) the Lord's lotus feet, which are sought after

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by the gods and others whose mind is fixed on the invincible Lord." *

In a tone of distress he repeatedly exclaims, 'I seek neither liberation nor knowledge, nor wealth nor supernatural powers and not even eminent fame. Let me have to be born in any species whatsoever, let anything happen to me, I am not in the least concerned with it. O my most Beloved Lord! Suffice it will if my love for Your beloved feet, my disinterested love, my mad love, my blind love, my love full of love, and my love full of the most Beloved continues to grow from day to day.'

" Birth after birth let me have devotion to Śrī Rāma's feet: this is the only boon I ask and nought else." ** (Said Bharatajī)
(Ra. ca. Ma. II.204)

* त्रिभुवनविभवहेतवेऽप्यकुण्ड-

स्मृतिरजितात्मसुरादिभिर्विमृग्यात् ।

न चलति भगवत्पदारविन्दा-

ल्लवनिमिशार्धमपि यः स वैष्णवाग्र्यः ॥

(भा० ११.२.५३)

** जनम जनम रति रामपद यह बरदान न आन ॥

(रा.च.मा. २.२०४)

Śrī Śāṅkarāchārya prays to the Lord in the form of the universal Mother —

' O Mother, with a countenance having the splendour of the moon, I do not want liberation, I do not even desire vijñāna (knowledge of Sākāra Brahma), nor do I desire happiness; my entreaty to you is only this that 'I may pass my life muttering the Names - Mr̥ḍānī, Rudrānī, Śiva, Śiva, Bhavānī'. *

अहिंसासत्यशौचदयास्तिक्यादिचारित्र्याणि

परिपालनीयानि ॥ ७८ ॥

78. AN ASPIRANT FOR DEVOTION SHOULD FOLLOW FULL WELL (ALL) RIGHTEOUS PRACTICES WORTH FOLLOWING LIKE NON-VIOLENCE, TRUTH, PURITY, COMPASSION AND THEISM ETC.

* न मोक्षस्याकाङ्क्षा वरविभववाञ्छापि च न मे
न विज्ञानापेक्षा शशिमुखि सुखेच्छापि न पुनः ।
अतस्त्वां संयाचे जननि जननं यातु मम वै
मृडानी रुद्राणी शिव शिव भवानीति जपतः ॥

(देव्यपराधक्षमापनस्तोत्र ८)

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In aphorism 76 the performance of actions conducive to the growth of devotion has been emphasized. In this aphorism by mentioning the name of five principal practices out of those actions and virtues the author establishes the extreme necessity of following them.

The attributes of divine gifts constitute a devotee's habit. Where there is devotion it is inevitable for the divine gifts to be present there. Out of a mistaken idea some are accustomed to say, 'practise devotion; it matters not if a devotee has no virtues. A man may commit any number of sins, but he should become a devotee, then there is nothing to be anxious about.' But this statement of theirs is as illogical, as the statement, 'Let the sun rise, then it does not matter if darkness continues to exist there.' Immediately the sun rises, light does spread there - the darkness vanishes by itself. Even so, when the sun in the form of devotion has risen, then the divine gifts in the form of its light will surely become manifest. It is true to some extent that God-realized Mahatma devotees cannot be judged by their external behaviour. Nevertheless, there are indeed certain qualities whose manifestation in them is extremely essential. Not only essential, but it is inevitable. These five qualities too are among them. The person who does not possess these qualities should indeed be considered as an object of fright even if

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perchance he happens to be a Sadhu or a devotee. Moreover, in most cases indeed, men devoid of these qualities are not sadhus or devotees at all. The aspirant should judge himself on the basis of these qualities alone. It must be borne in mind for certain that if the remembrance of God and the divine gifts are on the increase, we are then progressing on the path of devotion; if worldly objects are being thought about and the divine gifts are not increasing, we are then not making any progress and if the dwelling upon worldly enjoyments is on the increase and demoniacal properties are increasing then we are surely deteriorating. Loving remembrance of the Lord is a devotee's duty and the qualities constituting the divine gifts are a way of life with him. He renounces everything, but does not renounce these two. No doubt in accordance with the command or desire of the Sportful Lord, a God-realized devotee has in some cases to modify his mode of living. But this is not a rule, rather it is an exception. It is certain that he does not change his way of life through any kind of attachment, sense of mineness, desire, longing, egotism or delusion whatsoever. When due to some reason, there seems to arise at any time a clash between his mode of life and his natural Swadharma - Divine Love - then and there obtaining the Lord's permission he abandons his code of conduct for the protection of his Swadharma. It is for such situations alone

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that we find the examples of Bharata, Prahlada, Bibhīṣaṇa, the blessed Gopīs etc. when they have disobeyed the orders of their mother, father, brother and husbands etc. for the sake of God. But if we try to examine we shall find there too that right conduct has not been abandoned. In order to follow the path of love the devotees have very often undergone suffering themselves. It is a different matter for the state in which all the positive and negative imperatives get offered at the blessed feet of the Lord. But it should be remembered that this surrender comes about by itself and is not a forced one. The burden of positive and negative imperatives is removed from the shoulders of that love-intoxicated devotee, he does not do that consciously. Moreover, it is not that even in that state of ecstasy some evil may be lingering in him. But here we are talking about an aspirant and an aspirant should guard and follow extremely carefully the scriptural merits and righteous practices. The five qualities mentioned by the author of the aphorisms should in brief be understood as follows:-

Non-violence: Not to cause suffering in the present or in the future to any Jīva at all in any manner through one's body, mind and speech; rather one should ever remain engaged in the effort to make everyone happy.

Truth: To cultivate the intention to convey to another person through one's words, writings and gestures the very exact thing which one has seen, heard or understood. One should utter only such words which are true and at the same time sweet and beneficial too. Some people regard the use of harsh language essential in speaking the truth and go to the length of saying arrogantly that they are speakers of truth, whether it hurts or pleases anybody's feelings it matters not. But this is not so. Keeping aloof from the sentiments like malice, enmity, slander and back-biting etc. one's words should always be kept imbued with sweetness and truth from the point of view of one's own well-being as well as that of the other. Just as the radiance of the moon sheds light and at the same time it is cool too; even so the words of a devotee should also be truthful and sweet giving both light and peace. That truth too which may prove harmful to another is not desirable.

Purity: Both external and internal purities are necessary —

External:

- (a) To keep the body clean through the use of water, earth etc.
- (b) To keep the wealth pure by endeavouring to earn it by truthful and untainted means without encroaching upon the rights of another;

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- (c) To make the food pure by offering the cooked articles to the Lord, by getting them cooked in a pure place by a person who has taken a clean bath and out of meatless cereals;
- (d) To maintain one's conduct pure through spotless, guileless and loving behaviour;
- (e) To keep the house pure through hospitality and the resonance of the Divine Name;
- (f) To maintain the purity of all other external actions by following the scriptural injunctions.

Internal:

To keep one's mind pure through simplicity, love, humility, dispassion, freedom from malice, happiness, good thoughts and dwelling upon the Lord without allowing as far as possible the evils of hypocrisy, animosity, pride, attachment, jealousy, malice, grief, sinful thoughts, useless worldly thoughts etc. to enter the mind.

Compassion: To feel agonized in one's mind without any distinction on seeing the misery of any person whether he is of one's own family or a stranger, a friend or a foe and as far as possible to endeavour to remove his

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suffering even if it involves some suffering and sacrifice on one's part. This sentiment should be practised towards all living beings and at all times. Those actions which are harmful to Jīvas and cause suffering to them should be abandoned. Similarly an effort should be made to get stopped those national and social practices and actions which are injurious to the living beings.

Theism: One should have full faith like an ocular evidence in the Lord and the scriptures - God exists, He is All-pervading, the Lord of all, Almighty, Omniscient, supremely compassionate, supremely friendly, affectionate to devotees, friend of the destitute, and always present everywhere — the moment one believes in these things all sins and miseries vanish by themselves. The necessity of believing in the Lord is the foremost and the greatest. Once one comes to believe in the existence of God and His glory and attributes, the mind will then turn automatically towards the Lord. Whatever a man needs - the Lord is the repository of all that. If he wants knowledge, God is the embodiment of knowledge, if he wants love, God is full of love; if he wants bliss, God is bliss concretized, if he wants dispassion, God is supremely dispassionate; if he wants wealth, the Goddess of wealth Lakṣmījī, abandoning Her fickleness, is constantly serving His blessed

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feet; if he seeks sovereignty, the entire universe is the splendour of a mere particle of His sovereignty; if he seeks fame, the current of fame flows from Him alone, to sum up, whatsoever beauty, sweetness, love, affection, knowledge, dispassion, sovereignty, wealth, sense-enjoyments, happiness etc. we see in the world and the highest idea which we have in relation to all these things - all that abides in an insignificant portion of the Lord. The objects of this world of ours and our idea about those objects cannot compare even with a drop of the ocean of benign qualities like the entire beauty, sweetness and sovereignty etc. He who comes to know the Lord in this manner and have faith in Him, cannot apply his mind to other objects even for half a moment, abandoning Him, nor does he indeed feel happy or sorry at the coming or going of the transient worldly enjoyments. No doubt the faith in theism should be real. We should always remember the story of Prahlāda regarding the faith in the existence of the Lord. At the command of Hiranyakaśipu, hundreds and thousands of invulnerable demons sally forth to kill Prahlāda with all sorts of big weapons. (but) Says he -

" O demons ! My Lord Viṣṇu is present in these very weapons. He is present in you people too and in me also. He is present everywhere. Through the influence of this supreme truth, may these weapons and

missiles of yours have no effect on me." *

(*Viṣṇupurāṇa* I.xvii.33)

The weapons of the demons became ineffective, Prahlāda felt no pain at all through their blows.

In the venomous snakes and their poison, in the huge-bodied mad elephants and also in their tusks hard as flint, Prahlāda beheld his Lord. Prahlāda came to no harm at all through them. Prahlāda was thrown into the fire, in the fire he saw the form of the Lord with a colour of freshly formed azure cloud. He said —

" O father ! fanned by wind this fire too does not burn me. All the quarters seem to me so cool as if lotus curtains are hanging all around me.' ** (*Viṣṇupurāṇa* I.xvii.47)

* विष्णुः शस्त्रेषु युष्मासु मयि चासौ ध्यवस्थितः ।
दैतेयास्तेन सत्येन माक्रमन्वायुधानि च ॥

(वि.पु. १.१७.३३)

** तातैष वद्विः पवनेरितोऽपि
न मां दहत्यत्र समन्ततोऽहम् ।
पश्यामि पद्मास्तरणास्त्वतानि
शीतानि सर्वाणि दिशाम्मुखाणि ॥

(वि.पु. १.१७.४७)

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In order to kill Prahlāda the priests created Kṛtyā (an enchantress who is the cause of injury and destruction) and when failing to kill Prahlāda, Kṛtyā killed the priests themselves, Prahlāda then said --

' Lord Viṣṇu, the All-pervading universal Preceptor pervades all living beings, through the influence of this truth let these priests come to life. If I behold the Omnipresent and the Imperishable Lord Viṣṇu even in those who endeavour to kill me, then let these priests come to life.' *

Because of the unshakable theism of Prahlāda, the priests came to life.

Finally on being asked by Hiranyakaśipu, Prahlāda said enthusiastically with great firmness and unflinching faith, 'Yes, my Lord is present everywhere. He is present in this pillar too.' In order to prove the statement of

*

यथा सर्वेषु भूतेषु सर्वव्यापी जगद्गुरुः ।
विष्णुरेव तथा सर्वे जीवन्त्वेते पुरोहिताः ॥
यथा सर्वगतं विष्णुं मन्यमानोऽनपायिनम् ।
चिन्तयाम्यरिपक्षेऽपि जीवन्त्वेते पुरोहिताः ॥

(वि.पु. १.१८.४०, ४१)

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His servant-devotee as visibly true, the Lord manifested Himself by tearing asunder the pillar. What faith and how marvellous the result! Such is theism.

The devotees should endeavour to remain theists and advance constantly on the path of theism as far as practicable.

By adding the word 'आदि' (*ādi* - etc.) to 'आस्तिक्य' (*āstikya* - theism) the author of the aphorisms has hinted at the other divine qualities included in the divine virtues. In the *Śrīmad Bhagvadgītā* the following twenty-six qualities have been mentioned as constituting the divine virtues. Says the Lord —

- " (1) Absolute fearlessness, (2) perfect purity of mind, (3) constant fixity in the Yoga of meditation for the sake of Self-realization, and even so (4) charity in its Sattwic form, (5) control of the senses. (6) worship of God and other deities as well as of one's elders including the performance of Agnihotra (pouring oblations into the sacred fire) and other sacred duties, (7) study and teaching of the Vedas and other sacred books as well as the chanting of God's Names and praises, (8) suffering hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations and, (9) straightness of mind as well as of the body and senses; (10) non-violence in thought, word and deed,

(11) truthfulness and geniality of speech, (12) absence of anger even on provocation, (13) disclaiming doership in respect of actions, (14) quietude or composure of mind, (15) abstaining from malicious gossip, (16) compassion towards all creatures, (17) absence of attachment to the objects of senses even during their contact with the senses, (18) mildness, (19) a sense of shame in transgressing against the scriptures or usage, and (20) abstaining from frivolous pursuits, (21) sublimity, (22) forbearance, (23) fortitude, (24) external purity, (25) bearing enmity to none and (26) absence of self-esteem — these are the marks of him who is born with the divine gifts, Arjuna. " *
(Gita XVI.1-3)

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१ २ ३
अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
४ ५ ६ ७ ८ ९
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥
१० ११ १२ १३ १४ १५
अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपेक्षुनम् ।
१६ १७ १८ १९ २०
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥
२१ २२ २३ २४ २५ २६
तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शीघ्रमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति सम्पदं देवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ गी० १६.१-३

These Divine virtues abide in a devotee alone. This is why the devotees are called 'Devas' (divine men). In the *Padmapurāṇa* it is said —

' There are two kinds of Jīvas in this world - one 'Daiva' (divine) and the other Āsura (demoniacal). The ones, who are the devotees of the Lord (§), are Daivas and those alone who are not devotees are Āsuras (demoniacal). ' * (*Padmapurāṇa*)

सर्वदा सर्वभावेन निश्चिन्तितैर्मगवानेव
भजनीयः ॥ ७६ ॥

(§) According to the scriptures, here by the term 'devotee of Lord Viṣṇu' is meant a Sattwic devotee of any of the Names and Forms of the Lord. It is considered an offence to discriminate between Names and Forms of the Lord.

* द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन् दैव आसुर एव च ।
विष्णुभक्तः स्मृतो दैव आसुरस्तद्विपर्ययः ॥

(प. पु.)

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79. BECOMING CAREFREE ONE SHOULD INDEED WORSHIP THE LORD ALONE HEART AND SOUL ALL THE TIME.

This aphorism is of great importance indeed. In this the Devarṣi has pointed out a very beautiful method indeed of the Lord's Bhajana practised by a devotee treading the path of love. In fact, the man who comes to know correctly the Divine qualities, secrets and the glory of the Lord, nay, (even) who believes in them after listening to the same from the saints, can do no work with his mind, speech and body at any time whatsoever, other than dwelling upon the Lord. Says Lord Sankara —

"Umā, he who has come to know the true nature of Rāma can have no relish for anything other than His worship." *

(Ra. ca. Ma. V.33/3)

If a poor man happens to get a philosopher's stone why would he then cast a glance at anything else? Simply God alone is the supreme Reality, God alone is the lot of all,

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उमा राम सुभाउ जिन्ह जाना ।

तिन्हहि भजन तजि भाव न आना ॥

(रा.च.मा. ५.३३/३)

God alone is the substratum of all, God alone is Almighty, the repository of all Divine qualities, the treasure of beauty, sweetness and sovereignty, the embodiment of knowledge and dispassion, the image of the root of joy and in spite of all this He is our supreme friend, with out-stretched arms He is always awaiting to embrace us - having come to know this, is there any man, be he a Sakāmī (a man with a motive) or Akāmī (a man without any motive) a worldly man or a seeker for liberation, an aspirant or a God-realized soul, who will abandon the Lord and practise the remembrance of anybody else even for half a moment? We do not do so for the simple reason that we have not comprehended His glory. If we have heard, we have then not believed in it. The Devarṣi tells us to believe and to practise the remembrance of the supremely Beloved Lord constantly with our mind, speech and body; dispel all the anxieties from the mind. Free the mind of other thoughts. Just as a small child sitting in the mother's lap becomes care-free, even so be carefree by becoming a servant of the Lord. Should anything cause anxiety to him who has Śrī Rāma as a protector. Abandoning everything, renouncing expectation from everybody, accounting all as insignificant as compared with God, regarding all the worldly enjoyments as insipid as compared with that most divine and sweet nectar, regarding the entire beauty of the world as worthless as compared with the Form of that Syāma-Sundara

(Śrī Kṛṣṇa) who is the crusher of the pride of crores and crores of Cupids and the quintessence of beauty, take to His remembrance alone, offer the mind to Him alone, depend upon Him alone in every way, remember Him alone with the mind, think of Him alone with the intellect, chant His glories alone with the tongue, listen to His attributes and pastimes alone with the ears, relish His Prasāda alone with the tongue, smell the fragrance of the pollen of His lotus feet alone with the nose, experience His contact alone everywhere with the body, behold with the eyes always and everywhere the beauty of that Abode of beauty alone, serve Him alone with the hands, offer to Him alone the body, mind, wealth - all these.

As long as you continue to regard the worldly objects as your own, nay, have a sense of mineness in them, till then you would never be able to become care-free; these perishable, transient and changeable objects will never let you become free from care, withdraw the sense of mineness and attachment from them, entrust them to Him whose they are; well, no sooner you offer them to God, you become care-free. Then there is no fear of their destruction, nor there is any worry of their want nor the burning of a desire. And the moment, becoming care-free, you engage yourself in Bhajana just then you will start having at intervals a glance of the ocean of Divine bliss, sweetness and beauty, later your mind will never even want to turn in any other direction. Indeed your sight will not

turn towards sovereignty - and if perchance there is lurking any desire for sovereignty, then the treasure-house of all the sovereignties you will find in His blessed feet alone. For this reason alone, renouncing the infidelity in the form of attachment to worldly enjoyments, become the dear chaste wife solely of that Prāṇārāma (life-delighter) Beloved Lord. This is why Sunderdasji Maharaj has said ---

" My love is with the husband alone, the religious observances are for the husband alone, my welfare lies with the husband alone, my devotion is to the husband alone. The husband alone constitutes my sacrifices and yoga, the husband alone constitutes my enjoyments, the husband alone frees me from sorrow, my husband is all-in-all. I know and meditate upon the husband alone, he alone constitutes my merits and claims, my husband constitutes the bath in a place of pilgrimage, my opinions are those of the husband alone. Without the husband I have no refuge, Says 'Sundara' that from every point of view, the vow of chastity alone matters. A fish, lover of water, gives up its life when separated from water, just as a serpent cannot be seen alive without its jewel, the lovers of Swāti drops (rain - drops which fall when the Swāti constellation is in the ascendant) are known throughout the world - one is an oyster and the other is called Chātaka (rain-bird), then again, a

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lotus in a pond is the lover of the sun, and just as a Chakora (moon-bird) too exists as a lover of the moon, says Sundara - similarly uniting yourself in love with the Lord alone, you should not wander towards anything else on seeing some attraction." *

The Lord Himself enjoins —

*
 पतिहीसूँ प्रेम होय, पतिहीसूँ नेम होय,
 पतिहीसूँ छेम होय, पतिहीसूँ रत है ।
 पति ही है जग्य-जोग, पति ही है रसभोग,
 पतिहीसूँ मिटै सोग, पतिहीको जत है ॥
 पतिहीको ग्यान-ध्यान, पतिहीको पुन्न-दान,
 पति ही है तीर्थस्नान, पतिहीको मत है ।
 पति बिनु पति नाहिं, पति बिनु गति नाहिं
 'सुन्दर' सकल बिधि, एक पतिव्रत है ॥
 जलको सनेही मीन बिछुरत तजै प्रान,
 मनि बिनु अहि जैसे जीवत न लहिये ।
 स्वातिबिंदुको सनेही प्रगट जगत माँहिं,
 एक सीप दूसरो सु चातकहु कहिये ॥
 रबिको सनेही पुनि कमल सरोवरमें,
 ससिको सनेही हू चकोर जैसे रहिये ।
 तैसे ही 'सुन्दर' एक प्रभुसूँ सनेह जोर,
 और कुछ देखि काहू ओर नाहि बहिये ॥

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" Give your mind to Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and bow to Me. Doing so you will come to Me alone, I truly promise you; for you are exceptionally dear to Me. Resigning all your duties to Me, the all-powerful and all-supporting Lord, take refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins, worry not. " * (Gītā XVIII.65,66)

Who else will be unfortunate like us, if we do not practise the Bhajana of the Lord constantly, becoming care-free in every way even after getting such a solemn assurance ?

Therefore, realizing that our supreme welfare lies in this very thing, we should practise the Bhajana-Kīrtana of Lord Hari alone with a care-free and exclusive mind, beholding the blessed existence of the Lord always in all actions, while getting up and sitting down, while sleeping or awake and abandoning the anxiety of profit or loss and birth or death.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
 मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥
 सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
 अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

(गीता १८.६५, ६६)

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स कीर्त्यमानः शीघ्रमेवाविर्भवति अनुभावयति
च भक्तान् ॥ ८० ॥

80. ON HIS NAME BEING CHANTED (WITH LOVE) THAT LORD MANIFESTS HIMSELF SPEEDILY INDEED AND MAKES THE DEVOTEES FEEL HIS PRESENCE.

According to the foregoing aphorism through the exclusive practice of Bhajana, the Lord makes a devotee experience His Blessed form by manifesting Himself speedily and directly. Here the word 'आविर्भवति' should be understood to mean the manifestation of the Lord with a Form which is the essence of all Divine beauty, sweetness and bliss. In fact, there is no difference between Nirguṇa and Saguṇa (without attributes and with attributes) and Nirākāra and Sākāra (without a form and with form). He alone is Brahma imperceptible to the mind and intellect, He alone is the Creator - all-pervading with attributes and formless., He alone is the Universal Soul, He alone is Śrī Rama and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He alone is Mahā Śiva, Mahā Viṣṇu and Mahā Devī, He alone is the Virāta Puruṣa (the Supreme being).

Different from Him there is nothing else at all. When there is the attraction of the love of a love-intoxicated and obstinate devotee, then making His Divine Enrapturing Energy a pretext, He blesses the devotees by manifesting Himself in a Form which is the repository of beauty and adorned with divine and transcendental garments, garland, fragrance, weapons and ornaments etc. - (Says Tulasidasji) —

" There is no difference between qualified Divinity and the unqualified Brahma; so declare the sages and men of wisdom, the Vedas and the Puranas. That which is attributeless and formless, imperceptible and unborn, becomes qualified under the influence of the devotee's love." *

(Ra. ca. Ma. I.115/1, 2)

But it is not that this Form is produced by *maya* giving birth to the Universe. Herein all the things are divine, pure, eternal, transcendental and the embodiments of the Lord. This is why immediately on being confronted by this divine and blissful Form

* सगुनहि अगुनहि नहि कछु भेदा ।

गावहि मुनि पुरान बुध बेदा ॥

अगुन अरूप अलख अज जोई ।

भगत प्रेम बस सगुन सो होई ॥

(रा.च.मा. १.११५/१, २)

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even the faded minds of the self-knowing sages come to life and become infatuated with each and every article of the Form. The perverted forms of beauty, taste, smell, sound and touch of those sense-organs at which the heart becomes indifferent even in the liberation-seeking state then the attraction of sages and self-knowers towards these very items of beauty, taste, smell, sound and touch, proves that these items of Beauty, Taste, Smell, Sound and Touch etc. pertaining to the Lord's Divine Form are not created by the three Guṇas which are the offsprings of *maṇa*. They are the very Forms of God who is endowed with all virtues and (yet) always Nirguṇa (without attributes). This is why the sages get infatuated by them. It is for this reason that Śrī Śankarāchārya, the pre-eminent Āchārya (Teacher) of Vedānta says in relation to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa —

- That Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who showed Brahmā innumerable universes - each universe with a separate and wonderful Brahmā, all the Forms of Viṣṇu of the various universes, whose Charṇodaka (water in which the feet of a revered brahmin, or spiritual guide have been washed) Lord Siva supports on His Head, is some other immutable Nīlimā (Bluish Brilliance) full of Truth, Consciousness; Bliss, different from the Trimūrti (Fractional Incarnations of

Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa, who rule the universe in Their different forms).^{*} *
(Prabodha Sudhākara 242)

Once the (four) Ṛṣis - Sanaka etc., eternally established in the self, arrived in the Divine Vaikuṇṭhaloka close to Lord Mahā Viṣṇu. No sooner they reached the presence of the Lord and looked at His Form than were they enraptured. Even after constantly beholding the Lord's beauty their eyes were in no way sated at all. It was not that the Lord's beauty alone had enchanted them, but at the time of offering salutations no sooner did the fragrance of Tulasī-manjarī (holy basil blossoms) mixed with the pollen - dust of the lotus feet of the lotus-eyed Śrī Hari reach the interior of the sages with the breeze *via* their nostrils than the heart of those sages, who eternally and steadily experienced the bliss of Brahma, became unsteady, was drawn towards that fragrance,

* ब्रह्माण्डानि बहूनि पङ्कजभवान् प्रत्यण्डमत्यद्भुतान्
गोपान् वत्सयुतानदर्शयदजं विष्णूनशेषांश्च यः ।
शम्भुर्यच्चरणोदकं स्वशिरसा धत्ते च मूर्तित्रयात्
कृष्णो वै पृथगस्ति कोऽप्यविकृतः सच्चिन्मयो नीलिमा ॥

(प्रबोधसुधाकर २४२)

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was enamoured of it and they became thrilled with joy. * (Bha. III.xv. 43)

On beholding the beautiful forms of Lord Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, this very condition was experienced by Janaka of Videha who was pre-eminent among the knowers of Brahma and the best among the wise —

" ** Beholding Śrī Rāma's lovely and charming form, King Videha (Janaka) was particularly

* तस्यारविन्दनयनस्य पदारविन्द-
किञ्चलकमिश्रतुलसीमकरन्दवायुः
अमृतगतः स्वविवरेण चकार तेषां
संक्षोभमक्षरजुषामपि चित्ततन्वोः ॥

(पा० ३.१५.४३)

** मूरति मधुर मनोहर देखी ।
भयउ बिदेहु बिदेहु बिसेषी ॥
प्रेम मगन मनु जानि नृपु करि बिबेकु धरि धीर ।
बोलेउ मुनि पद नाइ सिरु गदगद गिरा गभीर ॥

(रा.च.मा. १.२१४/८; २१५)

beside himself with joy. Finding his heart overwhelmed with love the king recovered himself by recourse to reason and bowing his head at the sage's feet, spoke the following pregnant words in a voice choked with emotion." (Ra. ca. Ma. I.214.8; 215)

Immediately on confronting that treasure of beauty, the knowledge of Videha (Janaka) became numb as it were, his body-consciousness was lost and tears filled his eyes. Janaka pondered at what had happened to him ! How could the mind of Janaka get enchanted at the beauty of the boys - an object of the sense of sight. He composed himself with the help of discretion and fortitude, but he could not help making an inquiry. Bowing down at the feet of Viśwāmitra^{jī} the king wanted to speak, but the sense of discretion could not remove the melting mood of the heart, even while speaking his voice became choked and full of emotion; while describing his condition what did the king ask ? Just listen —

" Tell me, My Lord: are these two pretty boys the ornament of a sage's family or the bulwarks of some royal dynasty ? Or, is it that Brahma (the Absolute), whom the Vedas describe in negative terms such as 'Not that' (*Neti*), has appeared in a dual form ? My mind, which is dispassion itself in its natural form, is enraptured at their

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sight even as the Chakora bird is transported with joy at the sight of the moon. Therefore, Sir, I earnestly inquire of you; tell me the truth, my Lord; hide nothing from me. Deeply attached to them at their very sight my mind has perforce renounced the joy of absorption into Brahma." * (Ra. ca. Ma. I.215. 1-5)

The sage smilingly supported the King's presumption.

* कहहु नाथ सुंदर दोउ बालक ।
मुनिकुल तिलक कि नृपकुल पालक ॥
ब्रह्म जो निगम नेति कहि गावा ।
उभय बेष धरि की सोइ भाषा ॥
सहज विरागरूप मनु मोरा ।
थकित होत जिमि चंद चकोरा ॥
ताते प्रभु पूछउँ सतिभाऊ ।
कहहु नाथ जनि करहु दुराऊ ॥
इन्हहि बिलोकत अति अनुरागा ।
बरबस ब्रह्मसुखहि मन त्यागा ॥

(रा.च.मा. १.२१५/१-५)

Thus, that form, which even on being seen repeatedly enhances the desire to see it more and more is rather peculiar indeed. There is not one such thing in the world as on even being seen repeatedly may enhance the desire to see it. Experience does tell us that if there is a great desire to see an object there is indeed a great delight at first sight after attaining it; later, however, as the sight of that object gradually becomes easier, to that very extent the attraction for it continues to become less. But the Beauty of the Lord is such that one never feels sated at all even on seeing it continuously. As the love of a loving devotee continues to grow every moment even so the refulgence of the Lord's beauty too continues indeed to grow from more to more every moment. From moment to moment one sees newer and newer beauty and greater and greater attractive sweetness. That form of the Lord described thus is not sprung from *maya*. It is altogether Divine and the moment It manifests itself before a devotee due to the attraction of his love, that very moment It makes him experience Itself by making him filled with Divine sentiments. As long as that sweetness remains before him, till then the devotee abides in some Divine realm. Everything of his continues to remain divine. During that period he does not see or listen to anything other than the Lord's sweetness. He becomes one with It and he comes to know the Lord as He is.

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त्रिसत्यस्य भक्तिरेव गरीयसी भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ॥ ८१ ॥

81. OUT OF THREE TRUTHS (PHYSICAL, ORAL, MENTAL), (OR IN ALL THE THREE TIMES - THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, IT IS INDEED TRUE THAT) DEVOTION TO THE LORD ALONE IS THE BEST, DEVOTION ALONE IS THE BEST.

The three truths - physical, oral and mental - constitute Truth. Devarṣi Nāradaḥ had had experience of the excellence of devotion as compared with the three truths. Therefore, he repeatedly proclaims that Devotion alone is superior. In fact, it is indeed so. In the *Upaniṣads* too, the same declaration has been made —

'Abandoning all the ways and means take refuge in Devotion alone. Be a believer in Bhakti, become engrossed in Bhakti, through Bhakti all Siddhis (consummations) are accomplished. There is not one thing which cannot be attained through Bhakti.' *

*

सर्वोपायान् परित्यज्य भक्तिमाश्रय ।
भक्तिनिष्ठो भव, भक्तिनिष्ठो भव ॥
भक्त्या सर्वसिद्धयः सिद्ध्यन्ति भक्त्यासाध्यं
न किञ्चिदस्ति ।

(त्रिपादविभूतिनारायणोपनिषद्)

Liberation too is attained and the Lord with attributes, the Bestower of liberation also sports with a devotee. The Lord Himself has spoken with His blessed mouth —

" (Even) as fire which has fully burst into flames reduces a pile of firewood to ashes, so does devotion directed towards Me (whatever its origin) burn one's sins in toto, O Uddhava." * (Bha. XI.xiv. 19)

The Lord protects the spiritual endeavour of a devotee and as a consequence He Himself makes a devotee realize Him too and all have a right to this. Therefore, what else can be superior to devotion? The Lord has for this reason alone extolled devotion in the *Śrīmad Bhagvadgītā* too in several places; and in the twelfth chapter He has even gone to the length of calling a devotee 'युक्ततम' - the best of all yogis. This is why Devarṣi Nārada proclaims here without any reservation in a challenging mood and with a voice as serious as the thunder that it (the devotion towards the Lord in the form of Truth alone is paramount, devotion alone is paramount) is indeed the Truth out of the three truths - physical, oral, mental or in all the three times - the past, present and future.

*

यथाग्निः सुसमृद्धार्चिः करोत्येधांसि भस्मसात् ।
तथा मद्विषया भक्तिरुद्धवैनांसि कृत्स्नज्ञः ॥

(पाठ ११.१४.१६)

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रूपा एकधाप्येकादशधा भवति ॥ ८२ ॥

82. EVEN THOUGH INTRINSICALLY ONE,
THIS LOVING DEVOTION IS OF THE
FOLLOWING ELEVEN KINDS :—

1. ATTACHMENT TO ATTRIBUTES AND GLORY,
2. ATTACHMENT TO BEAUTY,
3. ATTACHMENT TO WORSHIP,
4. ATTACHMENT TO REMEMBRANCE,
5. ATTACHMENT TO SERVICE,
6. ATTACHMENT TO FRIENDSHIP,
7. ATTACHMENT AS A BELOVED WOMAN
(WIFE),
8. ATTACHMENT TO PARENTAL AFFECTION,
9. ATTACHMENT TO SELF-SURRENDER,
10. ATTACHMENT TO ABSORPTION IN THAT
(GOD), AND
11. ATTACHMENT TO THE PANGS BORN OF
SUPREME SEPARATION.

Those Mahatmas, who have attained the
acme of loving devotion, possess indeed all
these attachments, just as the blessed Gopis

had; whose example Devarṣi Nāradaḥ has cited earlier. If all these do not develop then love towards the Lord is practised with only one or more than one sentiment out of them according to one's liking. Love is only one in entirety, this is why no distinction of superiority or inferiority should be made in these loving devotees due to a difference in the loving attachment.

There have been countless devotees who have adored the Lord according to these different attachments. For the sake of example, some names are given below :-

1. Devotees with attachment to attributes and glory - Devarṣi Nārada, Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, Sukadeva, Yājñavalkya, Kākabhūṣundi, Śeṣa, Sūta, Śaunaka, Sāṇḍilya, Bhīṣma, Arjuna, Parikṣit, Prṥthu, Janamejaya etc.
2. Devotees with attachment to beauty - men and women of Mithila, King Janaka, Rṣis of Daṇḍakāranya, damsels of Vraja etc.
3. Devotees with attachment to worship - Śrī Lakṣmījī, King Prṥthu, Ambarīṣa, Śrī Bharatajī, etc.
4. Devotees with attachment to remembrance - Devotee Prahalādaḥ, Dhruvaḥ, Sanaka etc.

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5. Devotees with attachment to service —
Śrī Hanūmānjī, Akrūraji, Viduraji, etc.
6. Devotees with attachment to friendship —
Arjuna, Uddhava, Sañjaya, Śrīdāma,
Sudāmā, etc.
7. Devotees with attachment as a beloved
woman - (wife), The eight queen consorts
(of Lord Kṛṣṇa), etc.
8. Devotees with attachment to parental
affection, — Kaśyapa-Aditi, Sutapā-Prśni,
Manu - Śatarūpā, Daśratha-Kausalyā,
Nanda-Yaśodā, Vasudeva-Devakī, etc.
9. Devotees with attachment to self-surrender —
Śrī Hanūmānjī, King Ambarīṣa, King Bali,
Bibhīṣanaji, Śibi, etc.
10. Devotees with attachment to absorption in
That (God) — Yājñavalkya, Suka-Sanaka etc.
the Jhānīs (the men of knowledge); or loving
sages like Kaundinya, Sutrīkṣṇa etc.
11. Devotees with attachment to the pangs born
of supreme separation — Uddhava, Arjuna,
men and women of Vraja.

All the eleven kinds of love had developed
in the blessed Gopīs. But it is not that out of

the above-mentioned devotees only one kind of love had developed in each. Their names have been mentioned under the kind of sentiment which predominated.

इत्येवं वदन्ति जनजल्पनिर्भया एकमताः

कुमारव्यासशुकशाण्डिल्यगर्गविष्णुकौण्डिन्यशेषोद्धवारुणि

बलिहनुमद्विभीषणादयो भक्त्याचार्याः ॥८३॥

83. (ALL) THE ĀCHĀRYAS OF THE ESSENCE OF DEVOTION LIKE KUMĀRA (SANĀTKUMĀRA ETC.) VEDAVYĀSA, SUKADEVA, ŚAṆḌILYA, GARGA, VIṢṆU, KAUNḌINYA, SESA, UDDHAVA, ĀRUNI, BALI, HANŪMĀN, BIBHĪSANA ETC. WITHOUT BEING AFRAID AT ALL OF POPULAR PRAISE OR IGNOMINY SAY SO INDEED UNANIMOUSLY (THAT DEVOTION ALONE IS PARAMOUNT).

By mentioning the opinion of some principal Āchāryas of devotional essence, Devarṣi Nārada strengthens his statement. All these Mahāpuruṣas have been Āchāryas and knowers of the devotional essence. Sanatkumāra is constantly engaged in repeating the Mantra 'हरिः शरणम्' (Lord Hari is my refuge) and is the main founder of the path of devotion. Bhagavān Śrī Vedavyāsa declared devotion

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alone, as the foremost in his eighteen *puranas*, his *Srimad-Bhāgavata* is indeed the very mine of devotion. Not to talk, about the devotion of *Srī Sukadevajī*. The *Srīmad-Bhāgavata* which deals mainly with devotional bliss is the nectarean ocean having emanated from his own mouth. The devotional aphorisms indeed of *Maharṣi Saṇḍilya* are a standing proof of his being a principal *Āchārya* of the essence of devotion. In the *Garga-Saṁhitā* of *Maharṣi Garga* flows the current of devotion. *Maharṣi Viṣṇu* was a principal author of a *Smṛti*. One *Viṣṇuswāmī* has been a renowned *Āchārya* of a devotional sect. *Kaundīyajī* had attained *Siddhi* through attachment to absorption in God - so goes the tradition. Lord *Śeṣa* indeed chants the glories of *Srī Hari* day and night with his thousand mouths. He is the supreme *Āchārya* of the sentiment of service. He himself had incarnated in the form of *Lakṣmaṇa* - the embodiment of service. *Uddhava* was the principal friend of Lord *Srī Kṛṣṇa*. *Āruṇi* is regarded as an alias of *Nimbarka* who was a worshipper of the Divine Couple (*Srī Rādhā* and *Srī Kṛṣṇa*). King *Bali* is the very embodiment of attachment to total self-surrender; through the force of his devotion, the Lord Himself agreed to become his gate-keeper. The service sentiment of revered *Srī Hanūmānjī* - a prince among devotees - is famous. The fortunate *Bibhīśanajī* had attained the friendship of Lord

Śrī Rāmachandra through the glory of devotion. All these Āchāryas of devotional scriptures have extolled devotion without caring at all for the popular praise or blame and have proved the paramountcy of devotion through their life-long practices. In accordance with their views Śrī Nārada too is fearlessly blowing the trumpet of devotion.

य इदं नारदप्रोक्तं शिवानुशासनं विश्वसिति
श्रद्धते स प्रेष्टं लभते स प्रेष्टं लभत इति ॥८४॥

84. THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE BELIEF AND FAITH IN THESE INJUNCTIONS OF ŚIVA DECLARED BY NĀRADA, ATTAIN THE BELOVED (LORD), THEY ATTAIN THE BELOVED (LORD).

So far having expounded the devotional scriptures, the author of the aphorisms now describes the fruit of devotion. The Devarṣi says that they, who have belief and faith in this supremely beneficial advice stated by him or the injunctions of Lord Śrī Śiva Himself, the first Āchārya of the essence of devotion, attain the Lord in the form of the 'Beloved'. Without belief and faith one attains nothing at all. The doubting soul indeed falls from virtue - 'संशयात्मा विनश्यति' (The *Gītā*, IV.40) - 'a man possessed by doubt is lost to the spiritual path'.

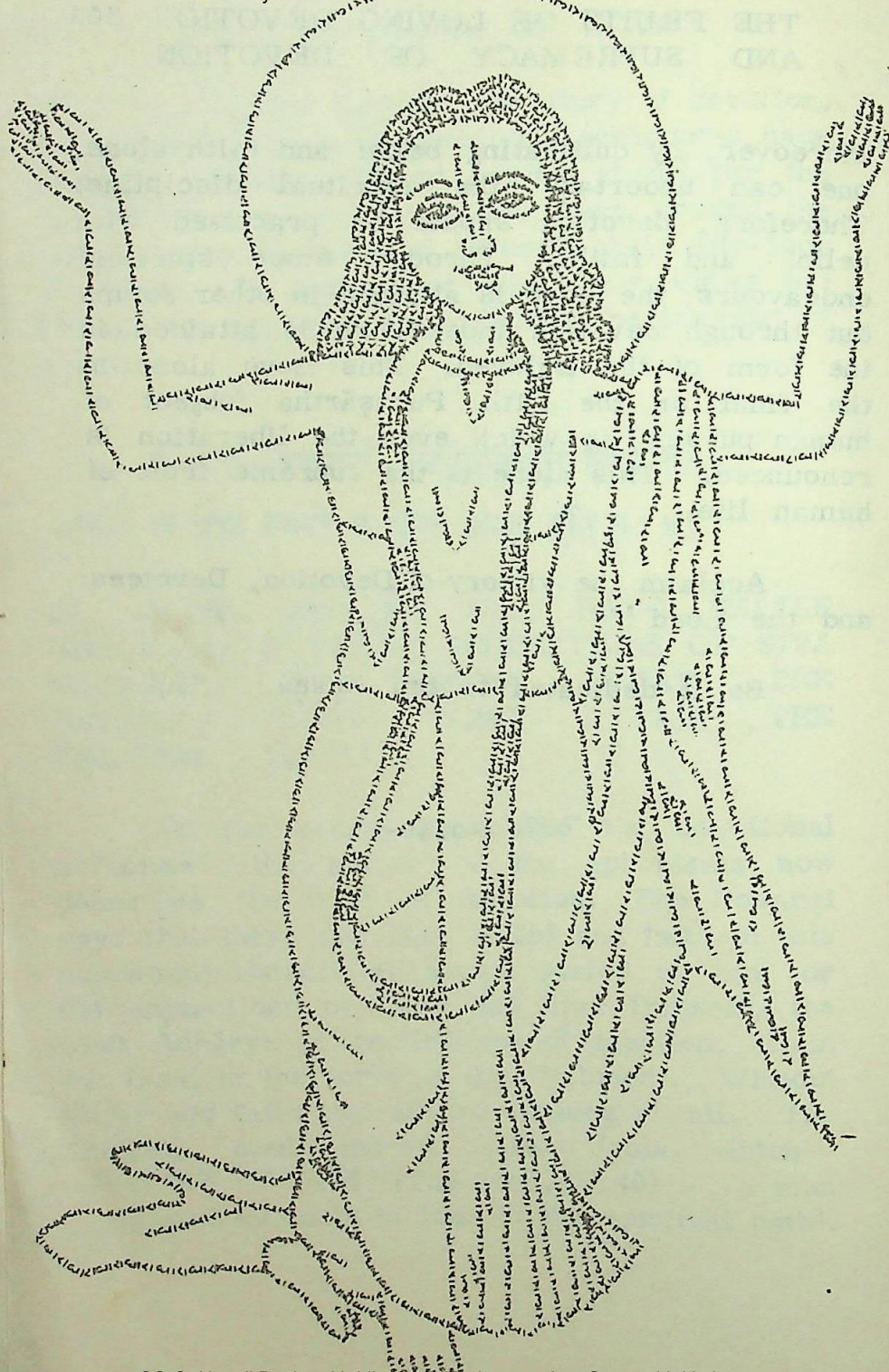
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Moreover, by cultivating belief and faith alone, one can undertake the spiritual discipline. Therefore, devotion should be practised with belief and faith. Through other spiritual endeavours, the Lord is attained in other forms but through devotion indeed, He is attained in the form of the Beloved. This Love alone is the final or the fifth Puruṣārtha (object of human pursuit) in which even the liberation is renounced. This alone is the supreme fruit of human life.

Acclaim the victory of Devotion, Devotees
and the Lord !

Be it dedicated to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

-o\$\$\$o-



Vinay Avasthi Sahib Bhuvan Vani Trust Donations

Vinay Avasthi Sahib Bhuvan Vani Trust Donations



श्रीकृष्ण - संदेश

[आध्यात्मिक साप्ताहिक-पत्र]

श्रीकृष्ण-संदेश का वर्ष जनवरी से प्रारम्भ होता है ।

श्रीकृष्ण-संदेश प्रतिमास ६४ पृष्ठ मूल्यपूर्ण पाठ्य-सामग्री देता है ।

वार्षिक शुल्क — १०) रुपया ।

आजीवन शुल्क — १५१) रुपया ।

सम्भव हो तो आजीवन ग्राहक बनें ।

व्यवस्थापक —

श्रीकृष्ण-संदेश

श्रीकृष्ण-जन्मस्थान-सेवासंस्थान

मथुरा-२८१००१

यह पुस्तक भारत सरकार द्वारा रियायती मूल्यपर उपलब्ध किये गये कागजपर मुद्रित-प्रकाशित है ।

मूल्य — १२) रुपये